The Unesco Courier
OCTOBER 1984 - 6 French francs

The Gypsies

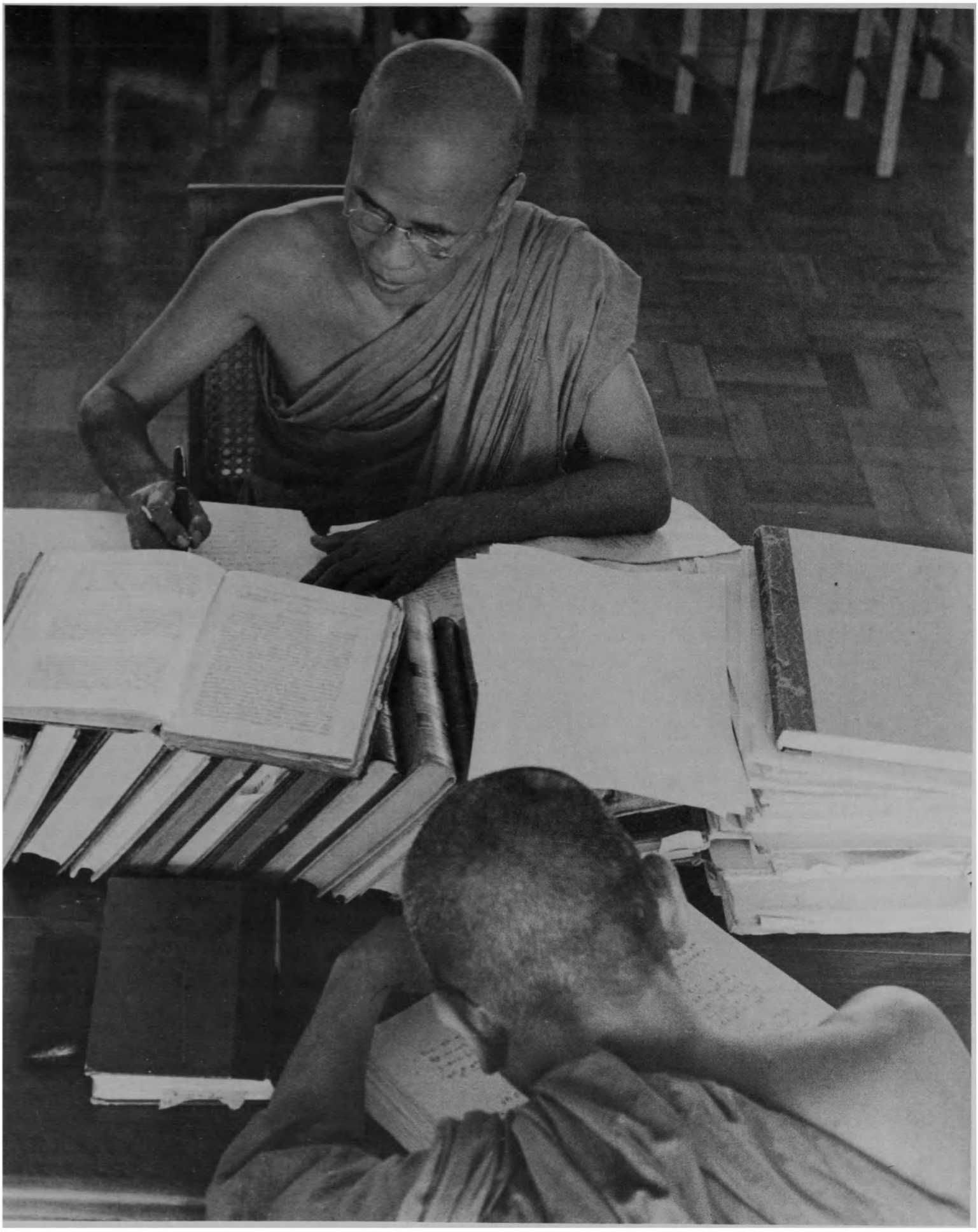


Photo Ernst Scheidegger © Rapho, Paris

A time to live...

28 Burma

The path to enlightenment

Monasticism plays a central role in Buddhism in which it is considered to be a means to the achievement of "enlightenment". Buddhist monks receive intensive instruction and in the countries of south and south-east Asia, where *Theravada* (Way of the Elders) Buddhism—sometimes called *Hinayana* (the Lesser Vehicle)—predominates, monks also dispense both religious and lay education. Above, Burmese monks deep in their studies.

The Unesco Courier
A window open on the world

Editorial

October 1984
37th year

MISUNDERSTOOD and maligned, the victims of prejudice and even of persecution, Gypsies form one of the minorities whose image has been the most grossly distorted throughout their long and troubled history.

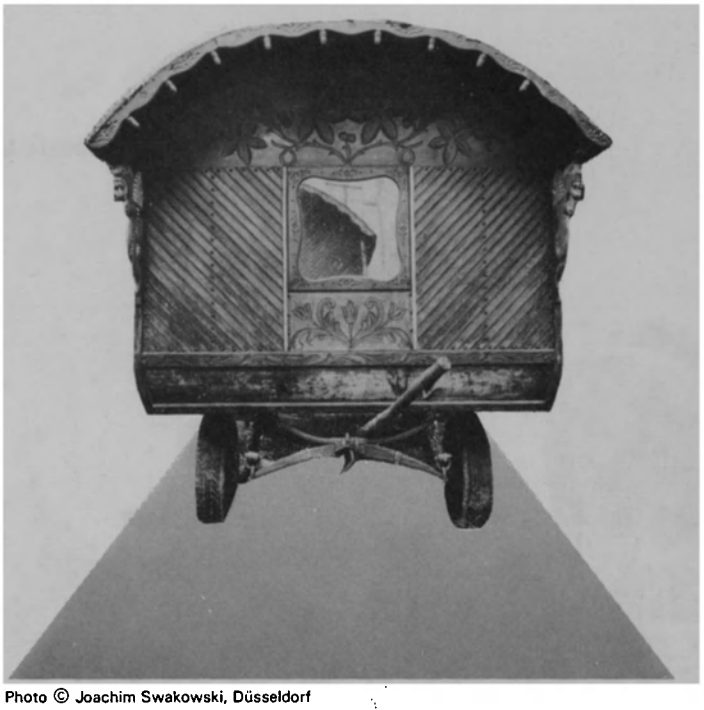
Subject to pressures from other cultures which threaten both their cohesion and their traditional way of life, the Gypsy community throughout the world is today facing new social and cultural problems. It is therefore more than ever vital to make known the true nature of the Gypsy identity, of the Gypsy past and present, so that greater understanding and closer co-operation can be established between Gypsies and the rest of the world.

The Gypsies have established their own associations worldwide through which they have made their voice heard by governments and international organizations. In 1979, the United Nations Organization, already long aware of the problems of this as of other minorities, accorded the *Romani Union* consultative status. In addition, the *Association des Etudes Tsiganes* (Association for Gypsy Studies), a non-governmental organization associated with Unesco, publishes *Etudes Tsiganes* (Gypsy Studies), a quarterly magazine that gives international coverage to matters of interest to the Gypsy community and to the problems that it faces.

This issue of the *Unesco Courier* aims to help achieve a wider international recognition and understanding of the Gypsy personality. The articles are written by authors who are themselves Gypsies or who have studied them and shared their life.

Most Gypsies refer to themselves as *Rom,* and this is the designation adopted by the United Nations. However, they are known by a variety of names in different parts of the world: in the English-speaking world they are called Gypsies or Romanies; in French-speaking countries, Tsiganes; in Spanish-speaking countries Gitanos; and so on. For the sake of clarity we have adopted these more familiar appellations in speaking of this varied but united people.

Cover: Detail from a painting by Zbyslaw Bielecki, a Polish worker who lives in a Gypsy community in Poland.
Photo © Joachim Swakowski, Düsseldorf



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Editor-in-chief: Edouard Glissant

Published monthly in **27 languages** by Unesco, The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 7, Place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris.

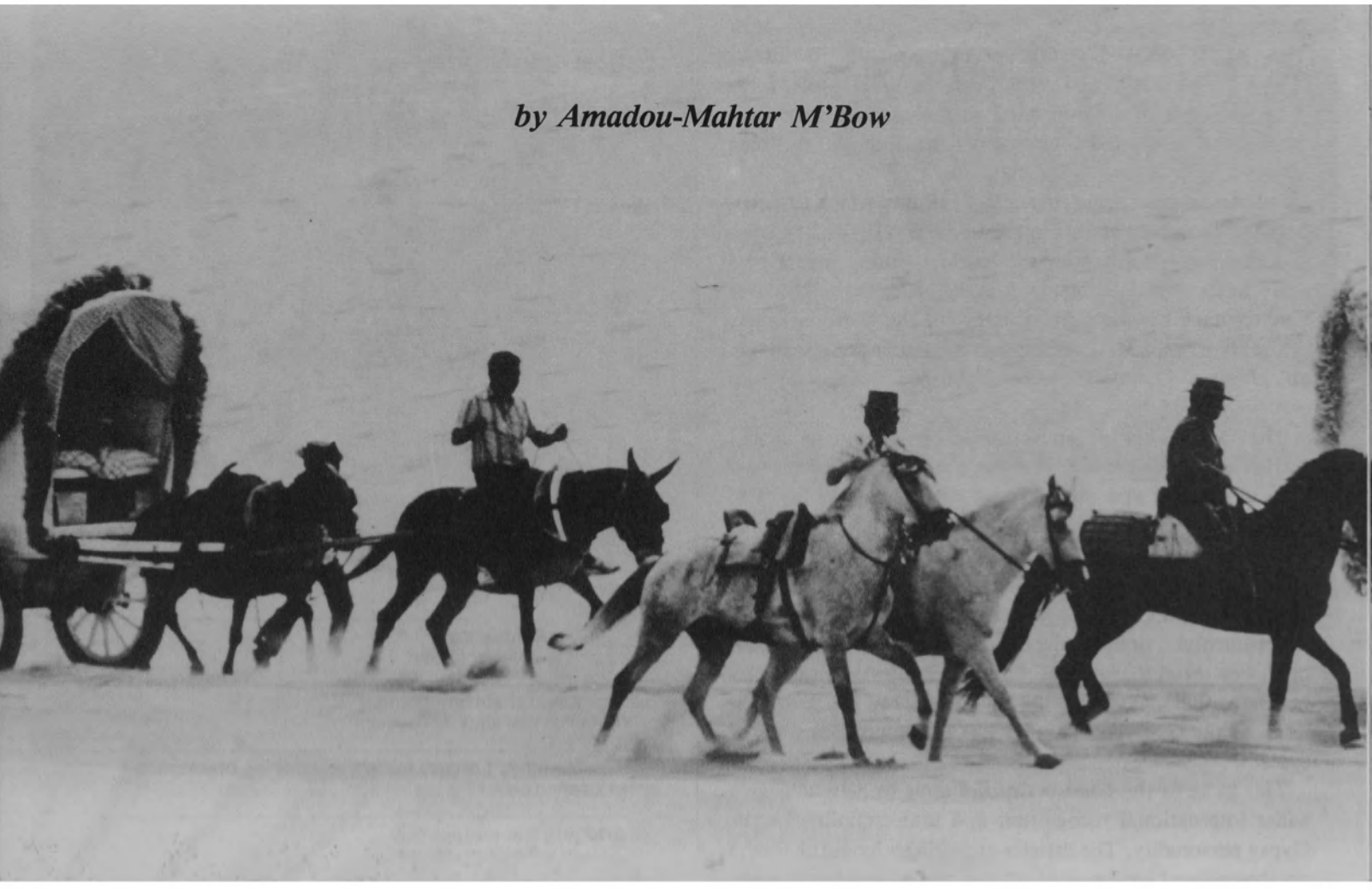
English **French** **Spanish** **Russian** **German** **Arabic** **Japanese** **Italian** **Hindi** **Tamil** **Hebrew** **Persian** **Dutch** **Portuguese** **Turkish** **Urdu** **Catalan** **Malaysian** **Korean** **Swahili** **Croato-Serb** **Macedonian** **Serbo-Croat** **Slovene** **Chinese** **Bulgarian** **Greek**

A selection in Braille is published quarterly in English, French, Spanish and Korean

ISSN 0041-5278
N° 10 - 1984 - OPI - 84 - 1 - 415 A

THE GYPSY DESTINY

by Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow



BY virtue of its endurance and tenacity, the Gypsy people has succeeded in preserving, throughout its wanderings, its authenticity and its personality.

Its nomadism has brought it into contact with the most diverse nations and yet it has never dissolved, nor even become diluted. Perhaps this is because it has not taken root physically, in earth, but in something far more profound: in a conscience, in social and human values. Hence its journeyings throughout the world remain, through all its vicissitudes, a movement of continuity and fidelity. For these two reasons, the history of this people which is so original and, perhaps, by virtue of its historic trajectory, the most international, is of particular interest to Unesco because it strikingly illustrates some of the great principles on which Unesco's action is based.

Unesco seeks to encourage recognition of cultural identity for all nations and for all communities, to promote relations between cultures, and to broaden as far as possible the dialogue between civilizations. For Unesco there can be no such thing as a culture of secondary importance. Whatever its political, economic or numerical power, every people has the absolute right to free itself from ethnic or linguistic discrimination of whatever kind, to achieve recognition and respect for its own values. No hierarchy can be established between majority cultures and minority cultures, for the seemingly most humble and least-known culture may enshrine truths which are necessary to all the rest.

Thus universality and cultural specificity are for Unesco two complementary notions. The destiny of the Gypsy people is exemplary, affirming as it does the permanence of its culture through its place in different societies.

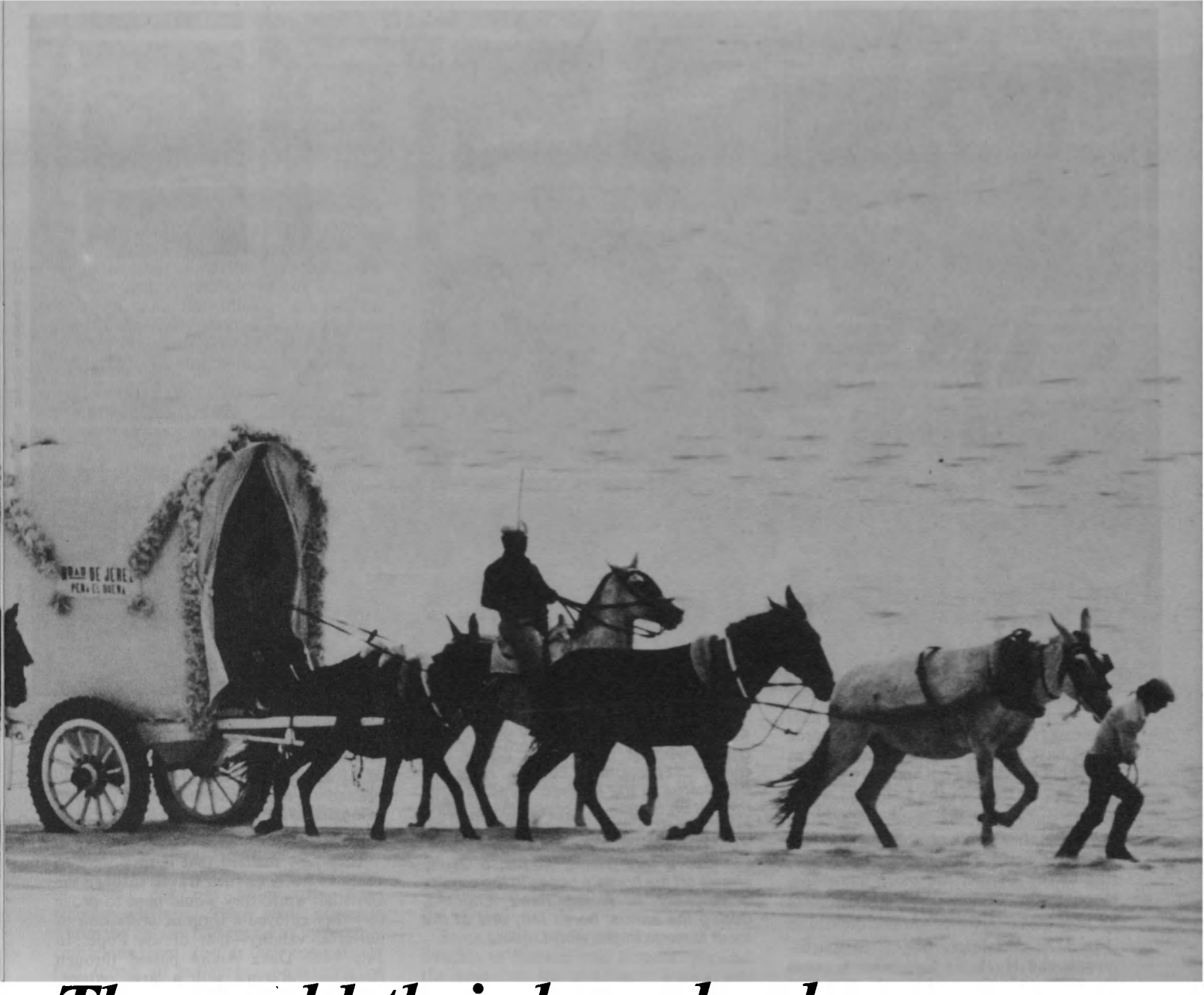
As an African, I cannot but add to these general considerations a number of more personal observations on the oral tradition and the precious values of a nomad culture.

The oral tradition has made a strong contribution to the vitality of African nations, preserving their soul and steadfastly sustaining their dignity. The oral tradition which is at the heart of the Gypsy culture may likewise have sheltered it from the assaults of history. Preciously transmitted from generation to generation along paths which recall the initiation methods common to all traditional cultures, it has in large measure enabled the Gypsies to remain true to themselves.

Nomadism, also widespread in the African Sahel, in close proximity to farmers who are most deeply rooted in the soil, exists in a relationship of mutual exchange and sometimes of symbiosis with the sedentary communities and has, too, been a guarantee of cultural authenticity and independence.

It can therefore be said, without fear of paradox, that the Gypsies, "these wanderers over all the earth", are, in terms of the ethical and aesthetic landmarks which guide them, one of the most stable of peoples.

Thus, thanks to its fidelity to itself, this people crowned with the halo of legend remains an authentic people, the subject of its own history. Even if its way of life is destined to change, there is no doubt that its tradition will last, a source of moral values, a rule of life, an inexhaustible inspiration for a culture which offers an outstandingly original contribution to the rest of humanity. ■



The world their homeland

by François de Vaux de Foletier

FOR centuries the origins of the Gypsies were shrouded in mystery. Here today and gone tomorrow, these bands of dark-skinned nomads with strange habits aroused the curiosity of sedentary populations, and many writers constructed a variety of often far-fetched hypotheses in an attempt to explain the enigma.

In the nineteenth century, although scientific investigation had already provided the answer, the most fantastic myths were still being made.

This jumble of ingenious superstitions and shaky hypotheses did not survive serious study of the language of the Gypsies. As early as Renaissance times scholars had some notions of this language, but they did not connect it to any linguistic group nor locate the area in which it originated. At the end of the eighteenth century, however, scholars were able to determine the origin of the Gypsies on the basis of scientific evidence.

Since then eminent linguists have confirmed the analyses of these early scholars. The grammar and vocabulary of the language of the Gypsies are close to those of Sanskrit and to such living languages as Kashmiri, Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi and Nepali.

Modern scholars no longer doubt that the Gypsies originated in India, but many problems concerning ethnic group, social class, and the period of their earliest migrations still need to be elucidated.

Linguistics is the discipline best able to locate the origin of the Gypsies, but anthropology, medical science and ethnology also have a contribution to make.

Documentation on the period that may be called "the prehistory of the Gypsies" is extremely limited. The writers of ancient India were only interested in gods and kings, and paid scant attention to the people known as the *Zott*, the *Jat*, the *Luli*, the *Nuri*, or the *Dom*.

From the time of their first migrations westwards we have somewhat more accurate information about the Gypsies, primarily in the form of two Persian texts in which legend and history are mingled. Writing in the mid-tenth century AD, Hamza of Isfahan describes the arrival of 12,000 *Zott* musicians in Persia. The same story was told half a century later by the Persian chronicler and poet Ferdowsi, the author of *The Epic of the Kings*.

The story may be to a large extent legendary, but it informs us that there were many Gypsies from India in Persia; they were already noted as musicians, allergic to agriculture, inclined to nomadism and somewhat given to pilfering.

These are the only ancient texts to speak of the wanderings of the Gypsies across Asia; the story can be filled out by linguistic evidence.

In Persia the Gypsies enriched their vocabulary with words which would later be found in all the European dialects. Then, according to the British linguist John Sampson, they split into two branches. Some continued on their way towards the west and the southeast, the others headed northwest. The latter journeyed through ▶

Photo H.W. Silvester © Rapho, Paris

Photo Bruce Dale © National Geographic Society, Washington, D.C.

According to a Hungarian saying "A Gypsy without a horse is not a real Gypsy". Throughout Europe, from the Bosphorus to the Atlantic, Gypsies have thrived on trading in horses. Even today, for a Gypsy, a horse is not just a mount, a beast of burden or a commodity for sale, but also a true friend. Above, a Gypsy shows off his horse's paces in the streets of Appleby, in Westmorland, England, during the annual horse fair, one of the most famous in the world.

▶ Armenia (where they picked up a few words which have been preserved as far away as Wales but which were not known to the first branch) and through the Caucasus where they borrowed words from the Ossetes.

Finally they reached Europe and the Byzantine world. From then on texts referring to the Gypsies are more numerous, especially the accounts of western travellers on their way to the Holy Land.

In 1322 two Friars Minor, Simon Simeonis and Hugh the Enlightened, noted the presence in Crete of people who were considered to belong to the race of Ham; they observed Greek Orthodox rites and lived in low black tents like the Arabs or in caves. In Greece they were known as *Atkinganos* or *Atsinganos*, from the name of a sect of musicians and fortune-tellers.

Modon, a fortified town and leading port on the west coast of Morea, was an important port of call on the voyage from Venice to Jaffa and the main centre where Gypsies were observed by western travellers. "As black as Ethiopians", they tended to be metalsmiths and to live in huts. The place was called "little Egypt" perhaps because, like the Nile delta, it was a fertile area in the midst of dry terrain. This is why the Gypsies of Europe came to be known as Egyptians, *Gitans*, or Gypsies. Their leaders would often be called Dukes or Counts of Little Egypt.

Greece was a source of new words for the Gypsies but above all the presence of a host of pilgrims from all the countries of Christendom revealed to them new ways of living. The Gypsies realized that pilgrims enjoyed the status of privileged travellers and when they took to the road again they also succeeded in passing themselves off as pilgrims.

After a long stay in Greece and such neighbouring countries as the Romanian principalities and Serbia, many Gypsies continued their journey westward. In provinces which had been fought over, captured and recaptured many times over by Byzantine and Turkish armies, their situation was not a comfortable one. Evidence that this was so can be found in the accounts they produced later in their exodus, when attempting to win the confidence of the spiritual or temporal authorities. They would tell how, after leaving Egypt, they were at first pagan but were then converted to Christianity, lapsing back into idolatry before becoming Christian again under pressure from monarchs; they were forced, they said, to make a long pilgrimage throughout the world.

In 1418 large bands passed through Hungary and Germany, where the Emperor Sigismund agreed to give them letters of protection. They appeared in Westphalia, in the free cities of the north, and on the shores of the Baltic, then turned south once again and travelled to Leipzig and Frankfurt-am-Main before entering Switzerland.

In 1419 they crossed the frontiers of what is now France. It is known that they showed passports from the Emperor and the Duke of Savoy at Châtillon-en-Dombes on 22 August, at Macon two days later, and at Sisteron on 1 October. Three years later other groups visited the Low Countries, provoking the astonishment of the citizens of Arras. But there as at Macon it was explained to them that they were on land belonging to the king and that their imperial letters of protection were of no value.

They now realized that if they were to continue freely on their travels through the Christian world they would need to prove that they enjoyed a form of protection of universal validity—that of the Pope. In July 1492 Duke André passed through Bologna and Forli with a large retinue, declaring that he was on his way to see the Pope.

However, neither the Roman chronicles nor the Vatican archives contain any trace of this visit to the capital of the Christian world.

Nevertheless, on their return the Gypsies described how they had been received by the Pope, and presented letters from Martin V. Were they authentic? Whether they were or not, for more than a century the papal letters ensured for the Egyptian companies an extremely favourable reception and enabled them to go wherever they wished.

In August 1427, the Gypsies appeared for the first time at the gates of Paris, then occupied by the English. For three weeks they encamped at La Chapelle-Saint-Denis, where crowds of the curious flocked to see them.

Certain untoward episodes took place; it was said that purses disappeared while crafty sorcerers were reading palms. The bishop of Paris reprimanded the credulous and superstitious faithful. The Egyptians were forced to move on and took the road to Pontoise.

Soon these companies had travelled the length and breadth of France. Some of them then crossed into Aragon and Catalonia, maintaining that they were on

the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. They traversed Castile and journeyed to Andalusia where Gypsy counts and dukes were splendidly treated by the former constable and chancellor of Castile, count Miguel Lucas de Iranzo, in his castle at Jaen.

Several authors have maintained without the slightest evidence that the Gypsies reached Andalusia from Egypt after sailing along the coast of Africa. Yet the Spanish Gypsies had no Arabic words in their vocabulary, and their itinerary was fully indicated: on their arrival in Andalusia they claimed the protection of the Pope, the King of France and the King of Castile.

In Portugal the *Ciganos* are first mentioned in literary texts at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Around the same time Egyptians were landing in Scotland and England; the route they had taken is not known. Perhaps they attracted less attention than they had on their early stays in Germany, France and the Low Countries, for since time immemorial there had been tinkers in the British Isles whose way of life was similar to that of the Gypsies.

The Egyptians who settled in Ireland had a much harder time. The tinkers who were already there in large numbers considered the newcomers as rivals and did all they could to repel them.

Count Antoine Gagino of Little Egypt arrived in Denmark in 1505 on a Scottish vessel. He had been expressly recommended to King John of Denmark by James IV of Scotland. On 29 September 1512, a Count Antonius, who is almost certainly the same person, solemnly entered Stockholm to the great amazement of the inhabitants.

The first Egyptians to appear in Norway, in 1544, did not enjoy the same recommendations. They were prisoners whom the English had got rid of by forcibly embarking them. Just as their compatriots had found an indigenous population of tinkers in England and Scotland, the Gypsies who landed in Norway came upon the itinerant *Fanter*.

Some groups of Gypsies emigrated from Sweden to Finland and Estonia. Around the same time, the kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania welcomed the "mountain Gypsies" from Hungary and the "plains Gypsies" from Germany.

Around 1501 Gypsy bands were travelling in the south of Russia; others were crossing from Poland to the Ukraine. Finally, in 1721, the Gypsies of the Polish plain reached Tobolsk, the capital of Siberia. They declared their intention of going to China, but the governor did not allow them to continue their journey.

During their long sojourn in Greece, where they lived in a region known as "little Egypt" (hence the names, "Egyptians", "Gitans" and "Gypsies", by which they became known in Europe), the Gypsies noticed that the pilgrims whom they saw passing through on their way to the Holy Land enjoyed a special status as privileged travellers. Later, as they travelled westward, the Gypsies often passed themselves off as pilgrims. Thus, the first leaders from Little Egypt to set out for Spain, in the 15th century, declared that they were going on a pilgrimage to Compostela. Above, the cathedral shrine of Santiago de Compostela, in north-western Spain; woodcut dating from 1491 by the German artist Michael Wohlgemuth (1434-1519).

Photo © Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries, Glasgow

Over the centuries Gypsies have used a variety of carts and tents for travel and accommodation, but it was not until the middle of the 19th century, in England, that the true caravan, or Vardo, first appeared. Although today many caravans are motorized, the horse-drawn caravan is still in use in many countries. Between about 1875 and 1920, an elaborate type of living van, the "Reading Van", which became very popular, was built in England at Reading, in Berkshire. The more luxurious vans, such as the model depicted above, were richly ornamented with decorative carvings.

Thus between the fifteenth and the eighteenth centuries all the countries of Europe had received Gypsies. But although they settled as far afield as the colonies of Africa and America, they did not do so entirely of their own volition.

Spain sent a number of Gypsies across the Atlantic, followed by Portugal which, from the end of the sixteenth century onwards, deported large numbers of *Ciganos* to Angola, to Saõ Tomé, to Cape Verde, and above all to Brazil.

In the seventeenth century, Gypsies were sent from Scotland to Jamaica and Barbados to work on the plantations, and in the eighteenth century to Virginia.

In the reign of Louis XIV, Gypsies condemned to penal servitude were released on the order of the king on condition that they went to the "islands of America". Bohemians figured among the colonists recruited by the *Compagnie des Indes* for the exploitation of Louisiana. Like other colonists they were given houses in New Orleans. A century later their descendants who had settled in Biloxi in Louisiana still expressed themselves in French.

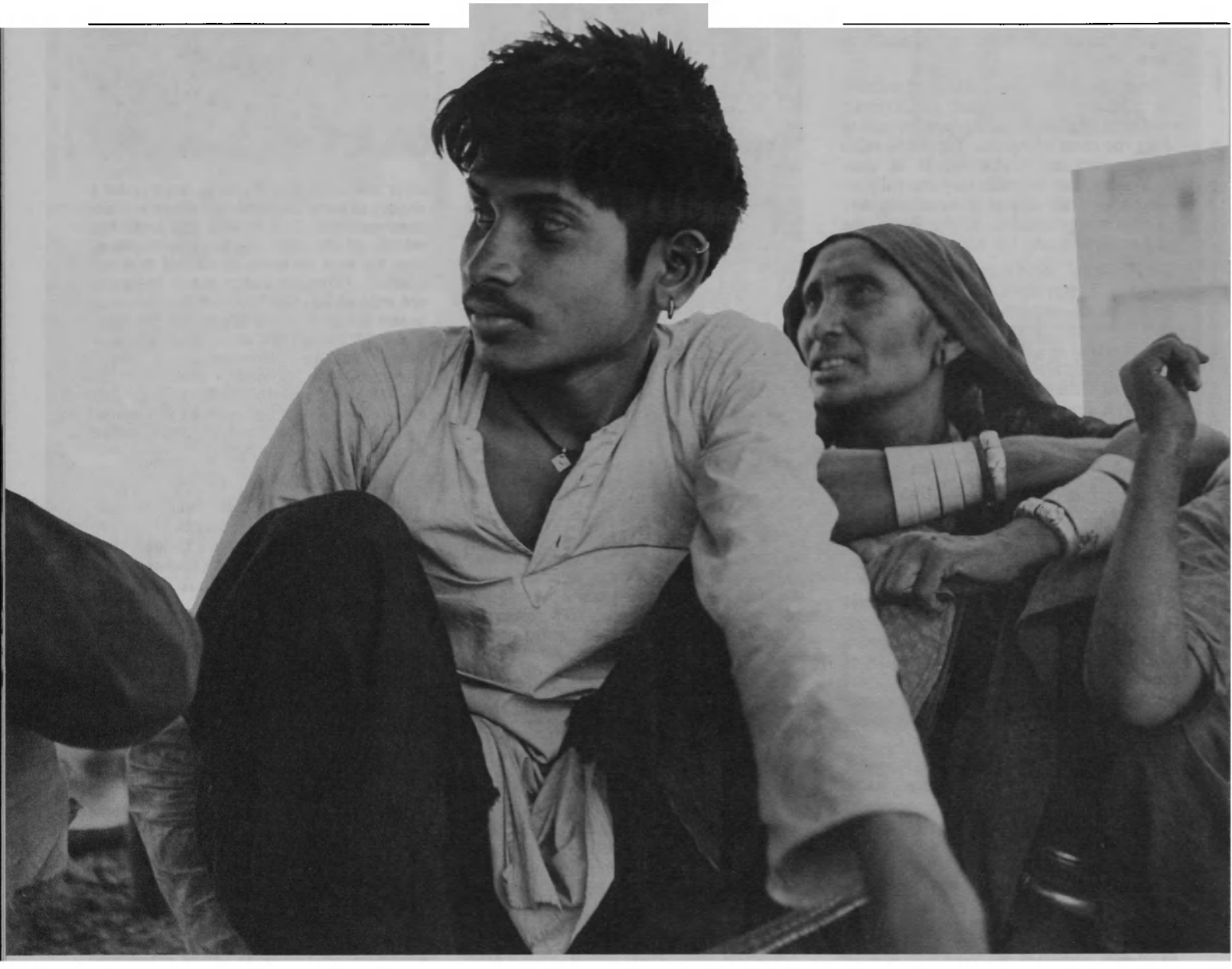
Since the beginning of the nineteenth century large numbers of Gypsy families have freely emigrated from Europe to America. They may be found in Canada, in California, in the suburbs of New York and Chicago, in Mexico, in central America and further south, in Argentina and Chile. They practise virtually the same occupations as they do in Europe, follow the same rites, and feel at home wherever they find themselves, for the place where they happen to be becomes their homeland. ■

Photo Bruce Dale © National Geographic Society, Washington, D.C.

Experts today are all agreed that the Gypsies originated in the Indian subcontinent, although they are less sure of the date (generally thought to be around 1000 AD) when they began their long migration westwards. The Gypsies were to spread across the whole of Europe and eventually throughout the entire world. Below, the village of Kadirpur (Pakistan), near the left bank of the Indus river.

FRANCOIS DE VAUX DE FOLETIER, *French archivist and historian, is a former director of the archives of the Seine and of the city of Paris. A student of Gypsy history, he has also lived among Gypsies and accompanied them on their pilgrimages. Among his many published works on the Gypsies are* Mille Ans d'Histoire des Tsiganes *(1970) and* Les Bohémiens au XIX• Siècle *(1981). The present article has been extracted from his latest book,* Le Monde des Tsiganes, *published by Berger-Levrault, Paris, 1983.*

The Gaduliya Lohars: India's



RESEARCH in linguistics, anthropometrics, ethnology, and other fields has conclusively established the Indo-Aryan origin of the Gypsies. But the precise nature of the kinship between the Gypsies as we know them in different parts of the world and the various groups which live in northwestern India has not yet been determined. One nomadic group, the Gaduliya Lohars of Rajastan, has attracted attention from Indian and European specialists because of the many similarities observed between its members and those of other groups which have been studied in Europe. These similarities occur in language, family and social structures, dress, and certain forms of popular literature and folklore.

Lohar means "smith", and *Gaduliya* is the name given to the distinctive type of ox-cart used by this group. The term *Gaduliya Lohar* may thus be translated as "wandering smith", as distinct from the sedentary Hindu smiths belonging to the *maru* and *malviya* castes who live in the same region. This dual status of smith and nomad determines their place in India's complex social system.

Rajastan is the region of origin of the Gaduliya Lohars, and they claim to belong to the famous Rajput group. Many orally transmitted accounts agree on this point. The present-day Gaduliya Lohars are descended from groups which served the Rajput princes, for whose armies they made and serviced weapons. Consequently, they enjoyed special esteem and consideration until 1567-1568, when the repeated assaults of the emperor Akhbar overcame the seasoned defenders of the Fort of Chittorgarh, bringing the Rajput dynasty to an end.

The defeat of the arms manufactured by them was felt by the Lohars as a serious blow to their reputation, and they swore to give up this traditional activity until the dishonour was repaired, devoting themselves in the meantime to the peaceful manufacture of domestic utensils and agricultural implements. In order to avoid conflict with smiths belonging to other castes who were already established in the large centres of population, they decided to take to the roads and serve towns and villages far from the main highways.

To cover the great distances involved, it was necessary to adapt the traditional cart of the region and create a model—the *gaduliya*—that would meet their new requirements. This model, created in the sixteenth century, can still be seen today on the roads of northern India. The original size and layout of the interior, used to store utensils, tools, and food, have not changed, although nowadays the cart is used only for transport and no longer as a dwelling as in the case of other nomad groups.

The *gaduliya* is made from *kikar (Acacia Arabica)* wood, and is stronger and heavier than other types of cart. Its peculiar features are the *thalia* and the *pheechla*. The former is a fairly spacious triangular chest which forms the forepart of the cart. The middle and rear parts, which are uncovered, constitute the *pheechla*, to which side panels are attached. The carts are built

wandering blacksmiths

by Esteban Cobas Puente

only by a small number of craftsmen who are established at Gangura for the north and west of the region, and at Barmer for the south and east.

The side panels, or *pankhalas,* the outside of the chest, and the wheels, are the only surfaces which the owner can decorate to give a distinctive aspect to his *gaduliya*. This decoration consists of bronze plates fixed to the wood. Those which cover the side panels are invariably divided into four sections, each containing sixteen compartments, and it is by means of the motif chosen to decorate each of these compartments that the family gives a distinctive appearance to its vehicle. These motifs include squares, lozenges, stars and stylized flowers. The long shaft by which the oxen are attached to the cart is decorated with plaited strips of buffalo hide.

The *gaduliya* is the real centre of family life. All the family belongings are stored there according to an unchanging order. In the triangular chest in front, the small door of which can be locked for security, are kept cash, jewels when not being worn by the women, gold, sweetmeats, solidified butter, needles and thread, the looking-glass, kohl and other cosmetics. In a word, the *thalia* is the family treasure chest. In the open part of the vehicle sacks of rice, lentils and flour are placed in the centre, while domestic utensils are placed on one side and the smith's tools on the other. The family clothing is stored between the sacks and the *thalia*.

As soon as a camp has been established, family life takes place exclusively around and under the cart; matting provides protection from sun and rain.

The new activities of the Lohars after the defeat of Chittorgarh must have been influenced by the nature of the environment in which they found themselves. They must have had to devise a balanced economic system based on the relationship between man and nature, between the natural and the artificial in a region like Rajastan where natural conditions and features can vary sharply from area to area and from season to season. For instance, the rainy season puts a stop to nomadism, and so fixed camp sites were established for the Lohar groups. Even today the Lohars still stay at these sites, known as *thiya,* every year from mid-May to mid-September. The period from May to July is devoted to rest, visits, weddings, and meetings of the group's ruling council. From July to September visits are made to local livestock fairs to purchase draught animals.

The remaining eight months are spent travelling, according to a pattern which has not changed since the sixteenth century and which enables each group to cover a particular part of the region. Every group has established relations with the peasants in its area, and these relations have been kept up by both sides for generations.

Life for the Gaduliya Lohars is lived mainly within the group. They do not stay long in populated centres. Much of their time is spent travelling, and contacts with individual peasants or peasant groups tend to be brief. This explains how they have managed to preserve their customs unchanged since they decided over 300 years ago to devote themselves to the service of agriculture. Their style of dress, their jewellery, even the men's hairstyles, have scarcely changed over the centuries. The same goes for their family customs, and their birth, wedding and funeral rites.

In the cultural mosaic of India, the Gaduliya Lohars occupied a distinctive place in Rajastan; they were accepted as an essential factor in the region's social and economic structure. They were not in competition with sedentary smiths. Each group had its own clientele. This situation prevailed for more than 300 years until in this century large-scale industry began to alter the pattern of India's economy.

The impact was such that many groups of Gaduliya Lohars were obliged to abandon their traditional circuits and sought new customers in other areas. It was a severe test for a nomadic smith to have to compete with other nomadic or sedentary smiths ▶

◀ ***This young Gaduliya Lohar is wearing, suspended from the black cord around his neck, an amulet in honour of Ramdeo-ji, a protective divinity who bestows health, prosperity, fertility and happiness. He is also wearing the men's earrings known as*** **murki** ***and, unusually, at top of his left ear, an*** **organia**, ***a piece of women's jewellery. The woman at his side is wearing ivory and silver bracelets, betokening her married status. On her ear can be seen the mark left by a heavy silver ring, which, like all these jewels, is used as security in borrowing and lending.***

Photo E. Cobas, Unesco

Traditionally the Gaduliya Lohars use goatskin bellows to stoke the fire of their open-air forge, but today some of them have adopted instead the more sophisticated mechanical devices used by sedentary craftsmen, such as this bicycle wheel attached to a pulley and turned by the smith's wife or daughter using the pedal as a handle. In background is the Gaduliya, the waggon from which this group of Indian nomads takes its name. The Gaduliya's design has not changed since the 16th century. Decorative motifs on the rectangular side panels are the family's distinctive emblem. ▶

Photo E. Cobas, Unesco

▶ from neighbouring areas, to give up old connexions, and above all to face the risk of coming into contact with other cultural models which were powerful enough to undermine his group's stability. The roads westward lead to the desert regions of the Sind, which are ill-suited to agriculture. The only practicable route led eastwards, where lay prosperity and promise. Many groups migrated in this direction; others stuck obstinately to the old circuits. The latter have suffered greatly from the changes which the invasion of the market by mass-distributed industrial products has brought to the region's economy.

During the past two or three decades attempts have been made by the authorities to solve the problem. As in other times and in many other places, the solution proposed was the sedentarization of the nomad. The Indian sociologist Professor Satia Pal Ruhela, a leading authority on the Gaduliya Lohars, has made a detailed study of official plans for "rehabilitation" by means of "colonies" established on permanent sites in the territory. He explains why most of these attempts have failed. He found evidence of ignorance or neglect of the psychological factors inherent in the nomadic character of the group, as well as of the mythological factors associated with the dwelling and the workshop. Above all, the balance of a number of social and cultural factors such as the internal cohesion of the groups and families was destroyed by their dispersal and by indiscriminate distribution of land in an attempt to transform them into farmers overnight.

Other Gaduliya Lohar groups which have gradually decided to modify and extend their circuits have entered into direct contact with other cultures and groups, and learned new techniques from them which have enabled them to improve and even expand their production of handmade goods, to their economic advantage.

The acculturation process which is an inevitable consequence of these contacts is reflected in a number of changes in the life style of the Gaduliya Lohars, some of which are very striking. The style of dress, especially for women, has been changing, becoming adapted to the new environment. Men, too, are changing their appearance by, for instance, adopting a less traditional hairstyle.

Faced with a hard struggle for survival, those who have remained faithful to the traditional circuits are also finding it difficult to preserve all their traditions, whether they be the decoration of their vehicles or the feasts and ceremonies of their traditional calendar. The situation is one which is not, unfortunately, confined to the Gaduliya Lohars. A social group is faced with a terrible dilemma when it has to decide whether to remain faithful to its traditions and risk the very survival of its members as a group, or to abandon these traditions and expose itself to all the risks of acculturation but ensure a level of economic well-being that satisfies its members' needs.

The solution does not seem to lie in either of the two relentless alternatives—to continue being Gaduliya Lohars and die slowly, or to cease being Gaduliya Lohars and survive. Between these two extremes there is a broad area full of possibilities which should be explored and exploited in order to save the cultural identity of those concerned. The benefit will not be for them alone. When a social group prospers and lives an active life, the whole of society benefits thereby. ■

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Blacksmiths at work. The anvil is a cube of steel which, as the home of Lakshmi, goddess of wealth, is invested with divine powers. The family's most precious possession, the anvil must never be lent to others nor used for any other purpose than metalwork. The head of the family, crouched beside the anvil, uses a small hammer called a* hatoda. *Contrary to what is shown in this photo, it is usually the wife who stands in front of her husband and wields the large hammer, the* ghan. *Her place may be taken by her daughter but never by daughters-in-law, who are not allowed to work at the forge.

Photo E. Cobas, Unesco

Photo H.W. Silvester © Rapho, Paris

Bridging the culture gap

by Jacqueline Charlemagne

Even among families that have adopted the sedentary life of the town, young Gypsy girls, whose main ambition seems to be to leave home and get married, are obliged to spend much of their time at household tasks and in looking after their younger brothers and sisters. Among nomadic families, Gypsy girls, like this one (above) in a Gypsy encampment in Greece, work even harder and longer at these tasks.

THE wide diversity of the groups of which the Gypsy people is composed emerges strongly from the variety of names given to them, none of which defines them fully and precisely.

In France today the word *Gitan* is commonly used to designate all Gypsy and nomadic people, whereas the *Gitans* are actually a highly specific ethnic group whose migrations culminated in Spain and southern France. Non-Gypsies, or *gadje*, sometimes simply refer to these people whose social organization is based on travel as "travellers".

Apart from the Gypsies, who are themselves divided into ethnic groups and sub-groups (*Rom*, *Manush* or *Sinti*, *Gitans*), there are the *Yenish* who are said to have come from Germanic Europe, and other groups which also lead a nomadic life but which are difficult to categorize. ▶

Home for a Gypsy is wherever he or she happens to be, whether crossing the marshlands of the Camargue, in southern France, in a donkey-drawn traditional caravan (far right), in a gleaming new caravan fitted with all modern conveniences on the outskirts of an English town (centre right), sheltering from the winter cold in a cave in Yugoslavia (opposite page), in a shanty-town, or in a prefabricated building in Avignon specially provided for them by the local authorities (right). Throughout their long history the Gypsies have developed the ability to adapt which has enabled them to cope with the vicissitudes that face a marginalized minority.

Photo H.W. Silvester © Rapho, Paris

▶ Various groups of Gypsies can also be distinguished from one another by differences in their life-styles. In France, where more than half the Gypsies are still nomadic, some are great travellers, while others restrict their movements to a region or even to a *département* (county).

The Gypsies practise various trades, but their activities remain traditional: tinning, basket-making, collecting scrap metal, music. In addition, they often have a seasonal activity, such as grape-picking and the harvesting of fruit and vegetables. The travellers are also itinerant vendors, pedlars and hawkers, shop-keepers and craftsmen. Few of them are salaried workers.

Their living conditions also vary. The caravan is the most common form of dwelling used by the travellers. As for those who lead a sedentary life, most of them (apart from a small minority who live like the surrounding population) are to be found in temporary settlements established on the outskirts of large cities, on waste land or in shanty towns, their caravans immobilized.

Though most of these wanderers move about by caravan, some use waggons. The *Rom* also often travel by train. Other forms of shelter are the tent (older even than the caravan), the cave (as in Spain), and huts made of branches. The travellers sometimes buy houses but as a rule do not live in them. Those who have become sedentary sometimes live in deplorable conditions—in shanty towns, old railway carriages, or insalubrious huts. In central and eastern Europe, where sedentary life is often compulsory, they concentrate together in streets and districts.

These groups of people who left India centuries ago and scattered throughout the world have always maintained their identity; but even more than the Gypsies' own conscious efforts, the attitude of the people among whom they lived has kept them apart. What are the common traits which make it possible to speak of a specific Gypsy identity? They are not to be found in the Gypsies' life style, as we have seen, nor in their dwellings, their travelling habits, their dialect, their way of dressing, their rites. Over and above these customs that vary from group to group and from country to country, the Gypsy feels a desire to be a Gypsy in a non-Gypsy society and to adopt forms of behaviour that stress his specificity. More than a common "Gypsyness" shared by all members of the group, a culture gap separates Gypsies from the rest of the community, whatever their country or place of residence.

For centuries groups of Gypsies were regarded merely as wanderers eking out a living from begging or larceny, or sometimes as slaves fit to be worked to death, as recorded in certain tales from Hungary and Romania. The "Bohemians" whose task it was to entertain noblemen were treated somewhat better, but their position was precarious and it was considered compromising to mix with them. The authorities viewed with suspicion these wanderers on whom it was impossible to keep a check.

The traditional activities of the itinerant Gypsy—pedlar, chairmender, sometimes a kind of sorcerer—were easier to practise in rural communities before the twentieth century. Today, the development of transport has encouraged sedentary trade by ensuring the rapid supply of a wide variety of goods at fixed prices established in advance. In this context the Gypsies are reduced to eking out a living on the fringes of society and they regard this precarious existence as a loss of their collective and individual identity.

Despite official statements calling for understanding between cultures, intolerance seems to be the rule, with the host community jealously guarding its own values as the Gypsies look to their past for ways of resisting what they regard as the destruction of their personality.

The Gypsies' legal status encourages this feeling of insecurity. In France, special travel documents were established by the law of 3 January 1960: a circulation book for those who have a regular professional activity, and a circulation record for French and other nationals who practise no regular craft or trade or industrial activity and have no regular income. The latter document has to be presented to the authorities every month. Moreover, persons with no fixed place of residence have to register with a local authority. The right to set up camp, which in theory is freely recognized, is in fact strictly regulated.

One thing emerges from all these regulations: the characteristics of the travelling people that are perceived by sedentary society are those which contrast with that society, and the socio-cultural identity of the Gypsies is never considered except when it creates a problem for the community.

Elsewhere in western Europe, and in the United States, legislators show a similar concern for assimilating the Gypsies and regulations regarding them are equally arbitrary. In Belgium, the concept of an "indeterminate nationality" deprives the Gypsies of many rights. In Spain, persecutions have never ceased since the Pragmatic Sanctions enacted by the kings. In the Federal Republic of Germany, the Gypsies have still not been able to obtain the compensation provided by law for the victims of Nazi persecution. In the Nordic countries where, for the same reasons as in the rest of Europe, the Gypsies' living conditions are not always favourable, a special effort has been made by the authorities in the field of literacy work and schooling.

In eastern Europe, since the advent of socialism, the "social problem" of the Gypsies has been solved through their gradual adoption of sedentary life. But special facilities have been granted to enable them to preserve their cultural heritage.

In many countries the Gypsies have been forgotten by social policy-makers. Under French law, for example, regular school attendance is obligatory for Gypsy or nomad children, and the payment of family allowances is linked to the child's record in this respect. Compulsory education thus increases the Gypsy population's dependence on national insurance benefits. The schooling of Gypsy children leaves much to be desired: the lack of suitably adapted programmes and specially trained teachers, a lack of interest on the part of parents who fear a break with traditional values, and rejection by the surrounding community have led to illiteracy and a low level of scholastic achievement among most of these children.

Housing also contributes to enclosing the Gypsies in a separate system, even when they have become sedentary. Families relodged in low-rent housing units have often lost their traditional social structure, for in such a situation the clan can no longer perform its controlling and socializing functions and is no longer a focus for identity. Traditional activities also change: it has become more difficult for families to find sufficient space to collect and sort scrap metal, for example.

For nomadic families, the caravan has a great cultural and symbolic importance. Yet the law offers no facilities for caravan-dwellers: credit establishments reject requests for loans, basing their refusal on the lack of sufficient guarantees, for a caravan is not regarded as a dwelling. Families whose caravan has been damaged or is out of commission and therefore unfit for the road simply have to stop travelling. Lack of money makes it impossible for them to take to the road again; all they can do is solve their subsistence problems on a day to day basis in the sedentary conditions that have been forced on them. Camping areas created with the avowed purpose of promoting nomadism become a kind of ghetto for families which find it hard to abandon itinerant life. ▶

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Photo Joseph Koudelka © Magnum, Paris

Photo H.W. Silvester © Rapho, Paris

How do young Gypsies face up to the hard daily confrontation with the non-Gypsy community? Failure at school, deviance and a crisis of identity are the sorry paths offered by a society which has shown itself incapable of giving its most deprived members a chance to overcome their handicaps.

These young people show a growing disaffection for school—many of them do not know how to read or write. After the age of fourteen none of them continues in school: the boys, at a loose end, become great "consumers" of television programmes, cassettes, and motor cycles, while the girls are kept busy with household jobs or looking after younger brothers and sisters. To all intents and purposes they take no part in the activities of the youth centres, cultural associations and other organizations serving the general community which they regard as expressions of the dominant culture.

When these young Gypsies are asked about their plans for the future, the boys answer "I want to pass my driving test" and "travel", while the girls say they want to "leave the family" and "get married". These replies are indicative of the strong influence still exercised by tradition, and a desire to perpetuate tradition through "family travel".

Indeed most young Gypsies feel strongly that they belong to a cultural minority whose values are as important as those of the non-Gypsy community. This leads to a certain pride which expresses itself in a narcissistic concern for dress. But the Gypsy identity to which these young people cling is no longer the same as that of their elders. Though the general framework remains the same, and the way of life and even the language are preserved, relations imposed by the social policy and increasingly coercive regulations of the dominant society inevitably introduce alien elements. This onslaught of contradictory influences alienates them increasingly from their own culture with the result that they are drawn towards other underprivileged groups with which it is possible to organize exchanges or to become integrated.

Does this mean, as some people maintain, that we are witnessing the last flickerings of the Gypsies' centuries-old resistance to assimilation? It may be so, unless we succeed in finding a meeting place between the two cultures, a way of reconciling two different worlds, before the gap becomes too wide to bridge.

Present trends which encourage particularisms of all kinds and the publicity given to statements by minority groups have given rise to cultural demands such as the rehabilitation of regional languages, festivals and traditional costumes. As far as the Gypsies are concerned, the growing number of people of Gypsy origin showing an interest in their past and their language, as well as the large number of publications on the Gypsy question and the interventions of certain Gypsies in the press, on radio and in public life in general—all this indicates beyond a shadow of a doubt that "something is happening". Morever, the growing number of social and cultural associations created by the Gypsies themselves is another example of the revival of Gypsy self-awareness.

Associations with a political colouring, such as the International Gypsy Committee, are older still. It is not surprising that the Gypsies should choose an international context to try to acquire a more precise legal status. Their main characteristic, mobility, puts them in an uncertain position with regard to national legislations, and they have come to realize that an international framework can enable them to assert their rights and put an end to discrimination.

The meetings of the "Romano Congresso" held during the last few years have reasserted Romany identity, recalled the Gypsies' Indian origin and called for the extension to Gypsies of all the benefits of social progress. Less well known is the attention being paid to the Gypsy community by a number of international organizations. The recommendation on the social situation of nomads adopted by the Council of Europe in 1975 is beginning to be widely known and to serve as a legal basis for the Gypsies' claims. Both the United Nations and Unesco have also shown great interest in the cultural and social problems of the Gypsies and nomadic peoples.

"... the Gypsy identity to which these young people cling is no longer the same as that of their elders..."

The Gypsies also believe in acting independently. Some, striving to establish their own means of cultural expression, are challenging their rejection by the dominant community and calling for equality and justice. Others are searching for their historical roots; one of their projects is to raise monuments in memory of the victims of Nazi persecution. For the Gypsies the past lives on in the present. Centuries of oppression have left their mark, and all too often relations between them and non-Gypsies are coloured by suspicion. The Gypsies cannot forget; we must try to understand them and establish a new dialogue. ■

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The Gypsy craftsmen of Europe

by Miklós Tomka

With the spread of industrialization since the Second World War and the increasing use of vehicles and agricultural machinery, many Gypsies have had to give up their traditional trades and become factory workers or find seasonal employment with which to supplement their income. Above, a Gypsy at work during the grape harvest in a vineyard in eastern France.

ACCORDING to biassed contemporary studies, Gypsies are regarded in Europe as work-shy riff-raff, vagabonds who only occasionally practise some of their traditional occupations such as metalworking, woodcarving, or carpet and horse dealing. At the same time it is assumed that during the 600 years of their presence in Europe they have always lived and pursued their occupations on the fringe of society. On the contrary, we maintain that for hundreds of years Gypsies were welcome and highly respected craftsmen in their first European homeland, in central and eastern Europe, and that it was only the bourgeois-industrial revolution that drove them to the fringes of society. Moreover, we believe that opinions about Gypsies in western Europe, which varied greatly from the outset, were due to the conflict between differing types of economy and life-style, one of them clearly pre-feudal and the other late feudal and then bourgeois.

It is probable that all the Gypsies of Europe, except, perhaps, those of Spain, passed through central and eastern Europe, and even today this region is the home of more than three-quarters of the Gypsy people. From the fourteenth to the seventeenth century this region was relatively thinly populated; there were very few towns and the population was repeatedly decimated by wars and frontier conflicts. Political organization was decentralized and often rudimentary.

Distinctive features of feudal culture were its ethnic diversity and active contacts with the peoples and cultures east of the line formed by the river Bug and the Carpathians, and sometimes with those of Asia, as well as with those of western Europe. The social system was prepared for population movements and caravans of exotically-dressed people of unusual appearance who spoke foreign tongues. In the midst of traders, emissaries, monks, the multifarious personnel of royal and oligarchic courts, travelling craftsmen and groups of mercenaries, and above all in the midst of systematic settlement operations, Gypsies did not attract much attention. Their assertion that they were pilgrims or penitents was readily accepted.

Although their communities were sometimes very large, they were always given the hospitality to which they were entitled. The increase in the number of virtually ownerless estates made gradual in- ▶

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▶ filtration possible without leading to any major conflicts or opposition on the part of the indigenous population. Nor was there any cultural conflict, especially since the last waves of ethnic migration had only just subsided and the arrival of relatively large groups of new settlers was still remembered by many.

Religious, linguistic and behavioural differences were regarded as normal, as was progressive assimilation through mastery of the local language, conversion to the "right" religion, and other such channels. National and cultural identity were not important in those times and did not constitute obstacles to socio-cultural integration. The decisive question was whether and how the new arrivals could earn their livelihood. In theory all paths were open to them and were often tried even simultaneously. Feudal deeds of endowment speak of Gypsy villages or Gypsy families who earned their living as shepherds or peasants.

Patents of nobility granted to families bearing the name of Cigány or Czigány suggest participation at an early date in military operations and prove, not only complete integration, but also the accession of individual Gypsies to the ruling class. From the outset Gypsies favoured certain activities, such as goldwashing, which inevitably brought them into close contact with feudal lords, non-Gypsy villages, military institutions and other parts of the fabric of the socio-cultural system. These contacts, the means of pressure available to the powerful, the inherent potential of the occupations they practised, combined, perhaps, with the desire to exploit the available economic and social possibilities, led to steady assimilation. The Gypsy origins of many families and villages was soon forgotten.

The occupational opportunities mentioned above were not, of course, always equally good. Prolonged periods of warfare such as the Tartar invasions of Poland and Hungary, and especially the Turkish advance from Asia through the Balkans and across Hungary as far as Vienna—a power-shift which was probably one of the chief reasons for Gypsy immigration to Europe—caused a decline in the indigenous population and created extensive depopulated areas. However, subsequent political stabilization soon led to the settlement and division of the lands, so that the possibility of freely acquiring land became the exception rather than the rule.

Likewise, a military career cannot be regarded as an habitual form of Gypsy life, and although some individuals may have pursued such a career, it could not have provided sustenance for the extended family group. Typical Gypsy occupations were those which met the real social needs of the host country while providing temporary employment at a given place, sometimes for several persons. Such occupations were metalworking and woodworking, in which women were often equal partners, basket-making, with the women and children providing the twigs and the women peddling the finished articles, and brickmaking. In this way families or groups of families formed a working community.

Although wrought-iron nails, gimlets and kettles, wooden tubs, troughs, plates and spoons, wicker baskets and cart-bodies, rush mats and brooms, were essential to life on a farm, many small villages could not maintain their own smith, still less trough-cutters and basket-makers. Moreover, neither serfs nor poor freemen could pay in cash but only in kind, and so they were of little interest to urban craftsmen. For centuries articles of this kind, as well as bricks, wood charcoal for metal-smelting, and bells for herds, were mainly produced by Gypsies.

The growth of villages and their needs eventually led many families of craftsmen to settle down permanently and become village smiths, smiths to big landowners, or weaponmakers in castles. They made wooden spoons and supplied bricks to surrounding villages. Those, such as trough-cutters, who produced rare and durable goods, continued to lead an itinerant life. Like the others they fulfilled an extremely important role. Until the mid-nineteenth century Gypsy craftsmen were regarded as irreplaceable in central and eastern Europe.

It was not until the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century that conflicts arose with urban craftsmen or guilds. These conflicts became increasingly acute with the emergence of industry and the resultant hardships for those engaged in handicrafts. A certain proportion of the permanently settled craftsmen of Gypsy origin had meanwhile become fully assimilated and for them there was no going back. As a result of industrialization they became proletarians or workless, or were forced to emigrate. Those who were not fully assimilated were ousted from a society that was itself in the birth-throes of a new era. They reacted to the loss of their means of livelihood and incipient discrimination by withdrawing into their own milieu. Confronted by non-Gypsy society, they sought and found support in family ties which grew into a competing social system.

The old Gypsy crafts continued to be practised but they were no longer enough to guarantee an adequate livelihood. Social marginalization went hand in hand with increasing poverty and such consequences of poverty as ill-health and high infant mortality. What were formerly highly respected occupations now merely attracted curiosity, and those who practised them were often outcasts. Gypsies were obliged to supplement their traditional sources of income by mastering new techniques of survival, and thus their isolation became complete.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a Gypsy problem emerged in central and eastern Europe; by the turn of the last century, it was increasingly becoming a criminal problem. In 1900, for instance, the crime rate for Gypsies in Hungary was 1.7 times higher than that for non-Gypsies. Fifteen years later it was 4.3 times higher; it had increased almost threefold. Whether the crime rate had really increased or the vigilance of the justice authorities had intensified is not a question to be debated here. At all events statistics reveal the rapid growth of the Gypsy problem.

A new factor appeared after the Second World War. The growing use of agricultural machinery and motor vehicles made horses redundant and transformed horse dealers into figures of the past. Isolated colonies of Gypsies continue to practise their crafts in associations, but the vast majority of those in central and eastern Europe are abandoning the old handicrafts and becoming unskilled industrial and construction workers. The acquisition of new dwellings

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Woodwork, metalwork and basketwork are among the crafts traditionally associated with Gypsies. Right, an Irish tinsmith repairs a bucket, and, top left, a basket-maker at work in Thessaloniki, Greece. Many Gypsies, however, have had distinguished careers in activities involving closer integration with the society around them. Notable examples include the Belgian-born French Gypsy, guitarist and composer Django Reinhardt (1910-1953), above centre, who created a unique form of jazz imbued with Gypsy ardour, and physician Sabi Yordanoff (above), pictured here in the laboratory of a hospital at Sliven, Bulgaria.

or old farmhouses, and a few years of school attendance, have once again facilitated integration into non-Gypsy society, this time not by practising traditional occupations but by abandoning the past. Thus, Gypsy occupations are now of interest only to students of folklore.

Gypsies were given a friendly welcome when they arrived in the countries of western Europe, because they were able to produce good letters of recommendation and were regarded not as settlers but as inoffensive passing strangers. (We now know that at least some of these letters were forgeries). However, a somewhat prolonged stay prompted people to ask questions: on whose land should they live, and with what money? A higher population density, close-meshed political organization and a more highly developed economy left no room for settlements and no certainty of an income.

The number of occupations which could be practised legally—such as showbusiness, which was more dangerous than remunerative in the period from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century—was very low. Most of these activities lay outside the prevailing economic order (this was the case for most trades and handicrafts), or, as in the case of fortune-telling, conflicted with the official philosophy and the law.

Weaknesses and uncertainties in the system, such as differences in the economic situations and jurisprudence of the countries concerned, were cleverly exploited by the Gypsies. Nevertheless, legislation obliging them to leave the country under pain of severe punishment and in some places declaring them to be outlaws, together with a policy of repeated prosecutions, succeeded in scaring them away. Most of them either stayed in, or returned to, central and eastern Europe. A few small groups led a marginal existence, eventually merging with other rejects of late feudal—subsequently bourgeois—society.

Post-industrial societies, concerned for human rights but also nostalgically turned towards the past, present a new scenario. In the welfare society all kinds of extravagances are possible, from a life on wheels or on water to the successful marketing of old-style handicraft goods. Thus, some Gypsy families are enabled to maintain their time-honoured life-style and occupations or to create new traditions by, for instance, entering the antiques and carpet business. It may be asked, of course, whether these are in fact old occupations, or whether they are not rather the activities of uprooted, alienated people, or indeed no more than tourist attractions. ■

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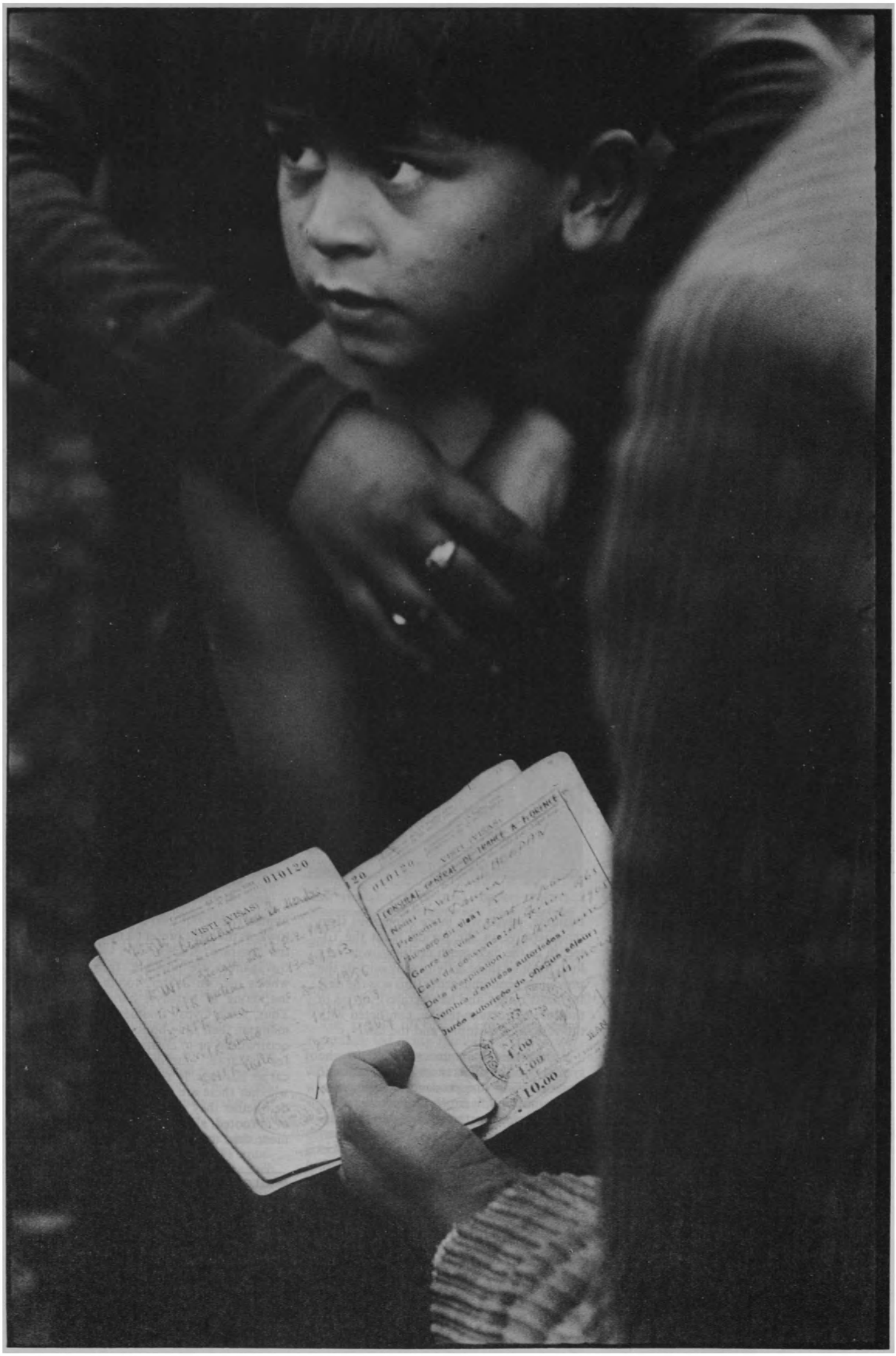

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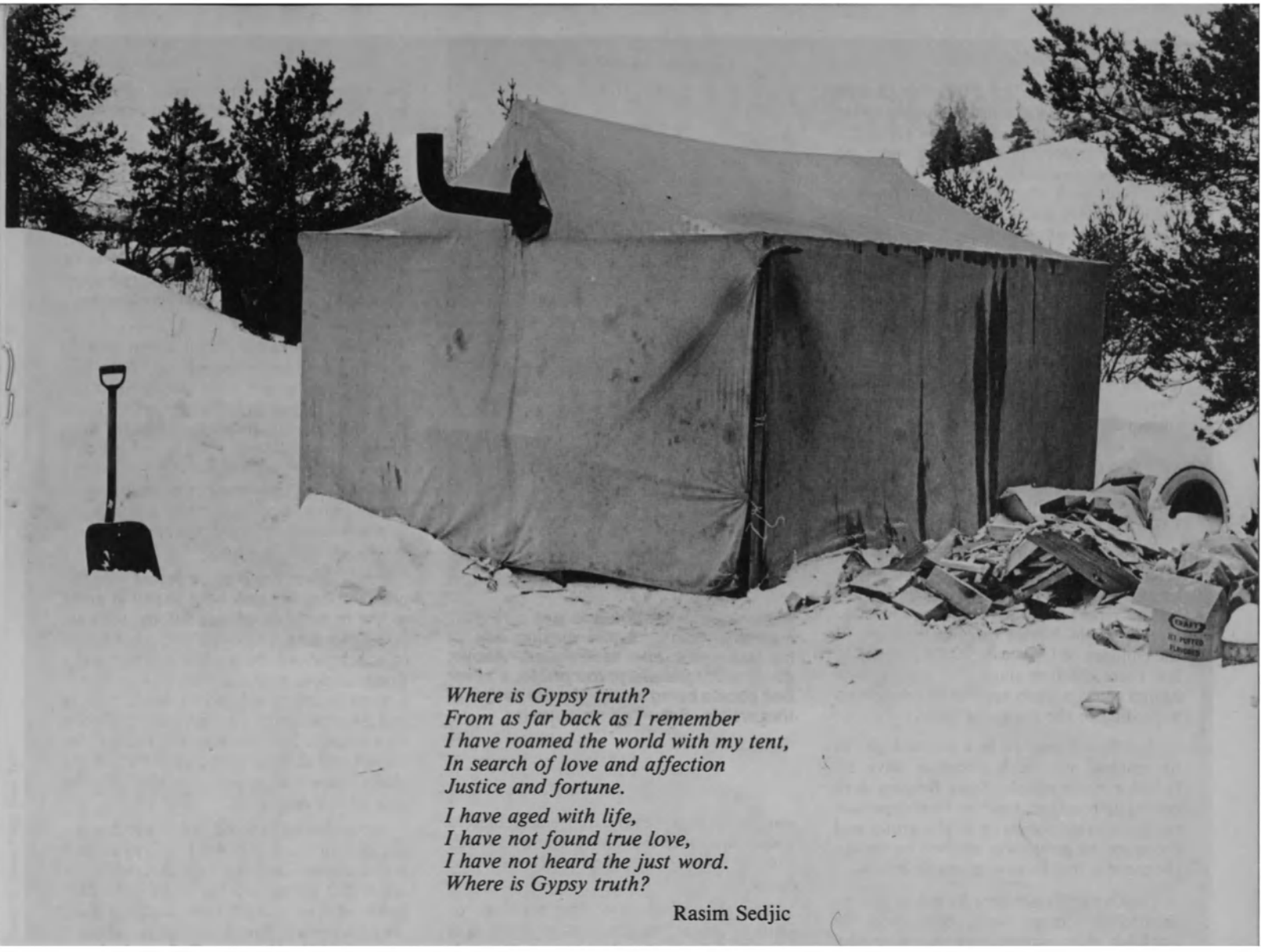


Where is Gypsy truth?
From as far back as I remember
I have roamed the world with my tent,
In search of love and affection
Justice and fortune.

I have aged with life,
I have not found true love,
I have not heard the just word.
Where is Gypsy truth?

Rasim Sedjic

The sharing, caring family

by Rosa Taikon Janush

Left, visa check for Gypsies of Italian origin leaving Sweden on their way to France.
Above, Gypsy tent in the snows of Sweden.

IN the early 1960s, my sister Katarina Taikon and I set out, with the aid of our husbands, Björn Langhammer and Bernd Janush, to change the attitude of society towards the Gypsy people which in Sweden as elsewhere has been relegated to a ghetto on the edge of society, without access to schooling or housing and deprived of any kind of social security.

No one ever asked us why the Gypsy people has always lived on the fringe of society nor how this way of life has affected the structure of the Gypsy family. Like ostriches people buried their heads in the sand. They did not want to see or hear; they did not want to face the facts. It is so much simpler and so much easier on the conscience to believe that the Gypsy people consists of the "picturesque" survivors of a nation that specialists who are no more than charlatans dare to criticize with rash judgments and prejudices, using such expressions as "They don't want to live in houses", "They must be as free as birds" or "They are always happy, singing and acting".

In point of fact, the conditions in which the Gypsies live and their need to protect themselves in an aggressive environment have shaped the structure of the Gypsy family. In her book *Ziganare är vi* ("We are Gypsies") Katarina Taikon has written: "From Greece, the Gypsies spread into different parts of Europe. Some went to the north, towards Moldavia and Wallachia, which formed part of Romania, but many were reduced to slavery... This slavery lasted until the middle of the nineteenth century. In 1845 the sale of 200 Gypsy families belonging to a Romanian boyar ▶

▶ was advertised in the Bucharest newspapers. In 1851 a list was published in an official Moldavian newspaper giving the names and description of 94 men, 85 women, 86 boys and 84 girls of 'Gypsy race' who had been the property of the late minister Alecu Sturdza and were actually advertised as being for sale with a part of his furniture".

Katarina Taikon goes on to draw up a long list of the repressive measures taken against the Gypsy people all over Europe, from the fifteenth to the twentieth century. When these atrocities are described to those who bury their heads in the sand, they say, "very well, but all that happened a long time ago. What does it matter to Gypsies today?" I do not claim to belong to "history" yet, but I should like to cite a passage from the same book which refers to an official survey dating from 1926, the year in which I was born.

"In a report published in 1926, we find a reference to 'the need to adopt effective measures against the Gypsies.' The authors of the report intended these measures to 'create special homes for the education of the children of Gypsies'. 'According to the law these children should be put in these homes at a very early age and be brought up according to the norms of society'."

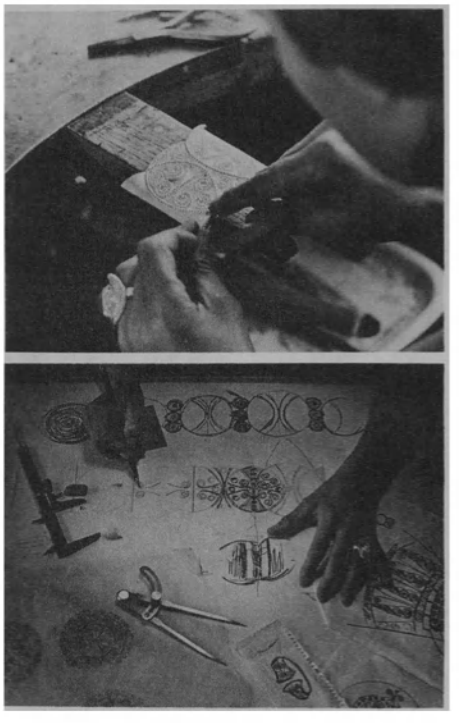
You do not need to be a psychologist to understand how such atrocities have affected a whole people. Since families were bound up together, their survival depended on the internal solidarity of the group and the more the group was crushed by society the more it had to strengthen its bonds.

The Gypsy people were forced to protect themselves; they were compelled to establish their own society within society and to issue verbally their own laws and moral rules which must be applied to the letter.

We Gypsy children were taught to obey our elders and to rely on them; their word was our law. Since we were excluded from schools and educational institutions, we depended entirely on the knowledge they could transmit to us. They applied to the utmost of their ability the theories of Plato "when they stressed the significance of education in preserving society", although they were illiterate themselves and had never been to school. As for myself, I never went to school until I was thirty-three years old although I was born in Sweden and am a Swedish citizen.

The principle of sharing which is followed by Gypsies in their camps is the only authentic form of democracy that I have ever come across. The money earned by the different members of the camp was shared out equally without any reference to the work each person had done. If a man fell ill and could not work, he continued to receive the same share as the others and his family was taken care of. A family consisted not only of father, mother, and children, it might also include the elder sister or brother of one of the parents, and the family assumed responsibility for them.

Often in a family, the maternal or paternal grandmother looked after the children and these children were never left alone. Her task was very important because she had to bring up the child while its parents were out working. If there were grown-up



Photos © Bjorn Langhammer, Stockholm

Many Gypsies continue to exercise their traditional crafts whilst making use of modern tools and techniques. Above, designs for jewellery; top photo, a silver belt buckle being worked by the author of this article, Rosa Taikon Janush.

daughters in a family, the eldest had to marry first since the family would have felt dishonoured if she continued to live at home.

The parents arranged the marriage of young people. The father of a young man would ask for the hand of the girl. The wedding would take place a few days later, for kinsfolk and friends sometimes had to come from far afield to attend the wedding. The women vied with each other in preparing the best meal. The guests were entertained by the best singers and dancers. The father of the bridegroom symbolically gave a sum of money to obtain the bride, a practice which was not exclusive to Gypsy society. The bride also had to be "pure", that is virgin, and her purity had to be confirmed by one of the oldest women of the camp who, after the wedding night, inspected the bed-sheets for "evidence" that the young woman had been pure. When this rite had been performed, a feast began that was as important as the wedding itself.

Many non-Gypsies have asked us why women should marry so young. This custom, which still exists in India, is based on a moral principle. Once marriageable the girl will marry only once and she will have to live with her husband all her life. When young people get married, they live with the parents of the bridegroom, for they are still young and need practical and moral advice and support. (Today it is often the young people who choose their partners themselves, and marriages may even be dissolved).

When a child is born in the camp, no one is admitted into the mother's tent or caravan except her husband and the old women. The mother is considered to be impure during the two weeks following the birth of the child. She has her own dishes, her own linen, her own washbasin, and her own sheets. After the two weeks, all the objects the woman has used are thrown away.

Many of these customs were simply a product of the Gypsies' instinct for self-preservation and their practical common sense. The woman and her child had to be presented to all who were living in the camp and ran the risk of catching a disease. Neither hospitals nor doctors took care of Gypsies in the past and so it was very important for the woman to be protected by these traditions.

When an elder fell ill and was at death's door, everyone gathered to bid him farewell, and above all to receive his blessing, as prescribed by Gypsy religion. Today this custom may create problems for doctors and hospital staff when a member of a Gypsy clan is hospitalized. Our traditions lay down that one member of each family must be present to receive this blessing but as a rule there are usually ten members present from each family.

Unfortunately it is to be feared that the price the Gypsies may have to pay in order to live in more decent conditions, with access to housing, schooling and other forms of education will be the loss of their many fine traditions which are tending to disappear as young people adopt modern ideas and laws instead of the conventions of their own society. Nevertheless, the esteem, the respect and the consideration shown to our elders cannot disappear for they are the core of our education.

In conclusion I should like to add that the terrible injustices of which the Gypsies have for centuries been the victims, with the result that my generation and those which preceded it were deprived of all civil rights, might have continued in our country if, around 1960, Katarina Taikon had not decided to combat prejudice and racism in all its forms. She wrote books and countless newspaper articles, approached prime ministers, the Government, Parliament and all the political parties.

But it is hard to stamp out prejudices from adult minds, and so Katarina decided to speak to children instead. She wrote the *Katitzi* stories to help young people to understand a minority more fully. But she paid dearly for her work for human rights and was laid low with a heart attack. Since 1982 she has been in a coma.

Nevertheless, the great work she accomplished in the last twenty years and the sympathy she has shown to all, whether or not they belong to her own people, will live on in the *Katitzi* stories which have been translated and read by children in many countries.

Perhaps it will be possible that, thanks to Katarina, the Gypsy people will become better integrated into society and enrich it by its art and culture. ■

ROSA TAIKON JANUSH *was born in Sweden into a family of Gypsy silversmiths. Admitted for the first time to an educational institution at the age of 33, she continued her education at the Stockholm school of industrial art and learned the craft of a modern "sedentary metal engraver". Continuing the family tradition of craftsmanship, she works as a silversmith at Ytterhogdal, Sweden.*

'A wandering voice'

by Giulio Soravia

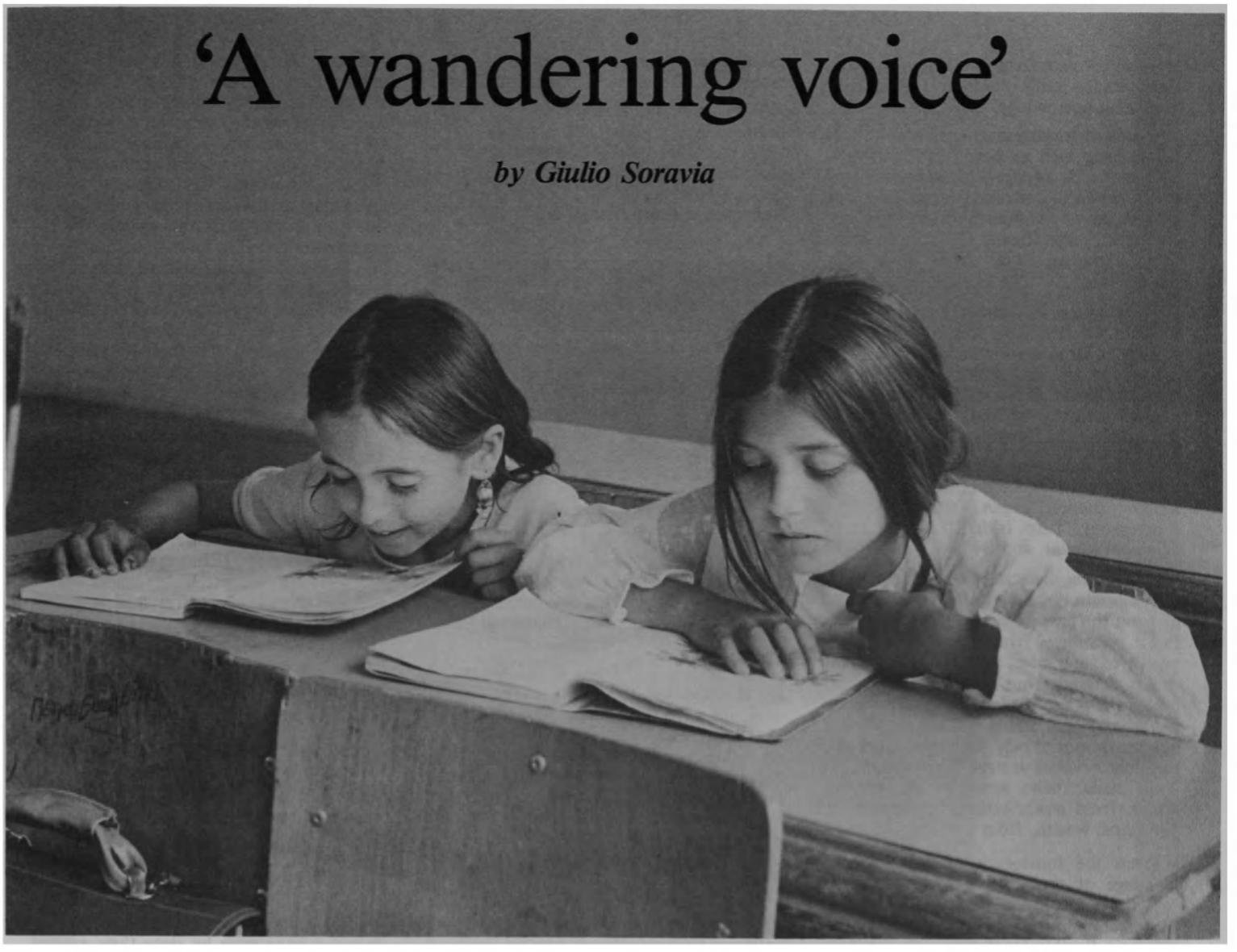


Photo © Diane Tong, New York

These two young Gypsy girls, at a State school in Thessaloniki, Greece, are learning about the history and culture of the country in which they live.

THE *Rom* or Romany people provide a particularly striking example of the notion that language is a key to a people's identity.

Scattered all over the world in a diaspora which has lasted many centuries, the *Rom* are united only by a common origin for which their language has provided decisive proof. Subdivided into as many dialects as there are groups of *Rom* on the five continents, this common language bears the imprint of their travels and links them to India, their original homeland.

What is remarkable, and what surprised the first students of the subject, is the persistence of grammatical forms which are in many ways similar to those of the Indo-European languages spoken in India today, and of a basic vocabulary which, in spite of certain phonetic changes, contains words found in Hindi, Punjabi, and the Dardic languages.

This is not surprising. When, a thousand years or more ago, the nomadic ancestors of today's *Rom* began their long journey westwards, they often had to halt, sometimes for a long period, in regions where they lived in proximity to peoples of different languages and customs from whom they borrowed certain cultural and linguistic traits. As a rule, however, they did not stay in these countries long enough to become totally assimilated or to become so far integrated as to lose their identity or their originality.

But even when they paused in a given region they continued to practise nomadism on a local scale. In the Middle East were groups which were given various names by their neighbours (such as *Nawar* in Palestine) but called themselves *Dom*. In Armenia they changed this name to *Lom*. A few decades later, in Greece, they became the *Rom,* a name they would retain throughout Europe and elsewhere in the world, thus breaking with their origins.

The phonetic evolution of their ethnic name makes it possible to trace the history of the *Rom* right back to the beginning. Thus, the language spoken by European *Rom* today contains many words with an *r;* words quite similar to these are found in Indian languages, containing a corresponding phoneme, the cerebral *d**. There is even a group of Indian nomads today who call themselves the *Dom*.

Many other nomadic peoples of India recall what must have been the origins of the European *Rom*. The most notable of these peoples are the *Banjara* and *Lamana,* who speak a language which is quite distinct from that of their European brothers and is closer to Hindi, for although they have remained in their country, their language has been influenced by the strong pressure of the sedentary culture. This explains its gradual divergence from the *Rom* language, while not invalidating what has been said above.

The course followed by the European *Rom* was slow but inexorable. Their traversal of Asia did not leave a profound mark on their language, in spite of the affinity between Indian and Iranian languages. ▶

* A cerebral consonant is articulated by curling the tongue tip up and back until its under surface touches the hard palate.

▶ However, *Romani chib,* the language of the *Rom,* undoubtedly contains Iranian and Armenian borrowings.

Words of Iranian origin are found in all the dialects such as *baxt* (luck, fortune), *ambrol* (pear), *khangeri* (church), *angustri* (ring), *ruv* (wolf), *vurdon* (waggon). Words of Iranian or Armenian origin are: *zor* (strength), *cikat* (front). Words of Armenian origin are: *bov* (oven) and *grast* (horse).

The language of the most westerly group of *Rom* was decisively influenced by their sojourn in Greece, which was probably one of their longest and which brought about the assimilation of a vocabulary and grammatical forms to be found later in all the *Rom* dialects of Europe.

The following words are of Greek origin: *drom* (path, road), *karfin* (nail), *klidi* (key), *kokalo* (bone), *papin* (goose), *petalos* (horseshoe), *tsox* (skirt), *zumi* (soup), *(v)amoni* (anvil), and *isviri* (hammer).

Many *Rom* dialects have morphemes of Greek origin including: *-mé,* which is used to form the past participle *(ramomé:* written; *pahomé:* frozen; *vezlimé:* embroidered) and *-mos,* which is used to form nouns derived from verbs or adjectives, taking the place of the suffix *-pé,* which is of Indian origin and is still used in certain dialects *(pimos* or *pibé:* beverage, from *pi-:* to drink; *nevimos* or *nevipé:* novelty, news, from *nevo:* new; *ternimos* or *ternipé:* youth, from *terno:* young; *barvalimos* or *barvalipé:* wealth, from *barvalo:* rich).

From the fourteenth century on, the language of the *Rom* was transformed, sometimes profoundly, in the different European countries they "visited". It is a rich and flexible language, with complex declensions for nouns and verb conjugations which allow for a very wide degree of communication. In the Balkan dialects, where declensions have survived, a masculine or feminine noun, singular or plural, may have eight cases. Let us take the example of the plural of *phral* (brother):

nominative: *phrala* (brothers)
genitive: *phralengo* (of the brothers)
dative: *phralenge* (to the brothers)
accusative: *phralem* (the brothers)
vocative: *phralale* (brothers!)
ablative: *phralendar* (by the brothers)
locative: *phraleste* (at the brothers')
instrumental: *phralentsa* (with the brothers)

Verbs have five tenses:
present: *kerav* (I do)
imperfect: *keravas* (I was doing)
past: *kerdem* (I did)
perfect: *kerdemas* (I have done)
future: *kam-kerav* (I shall do)

The declension of nouns survived with less difficulty in eastern Europe because of the influence of the Slav languages in which the noun is fully declined. Other dialects, however, such as that of the now extinct group of Welsh Gypsies, preserved declensions of remarkable richness. Nevertheless in western Europe the tendency was for declensions to disappear and for the noun to be "declined" using prepositions. In some Sinto dialects of central Europe prepositions taken from German are used:
fon u pral (of the brother)
an u pral (to the brother)
mit u pral (with the brother)

The *Romani* vocabulary was enriched by many borrowings from the Slav languages, from Hungarian, from Romanian, from German, from Italian and from other European languages.

The flexibility of *Romani* is also revealed in a capacity to create new forms, sometimes by means of astonishing combinations of words of different etymological origin. In one Sinto dialect, for instance, the word *svigardaj* (mother-in-law) has been composed from *daj* (mother) a word of Indian origin, and an adaptation of the German word *Schwieger (Schwiegermutter:* mother-in-law). The word *ledomé* (frozen) occurs in the dialect of a group of Muslim Gypsies in the south of Yugoslavia; it is composed of the Slav word *led* (ice) followed by the suffix *mé,* which is of Greek origin, as we have seen.

Thus, instead of degenerating, the language of the Gypsies changes in tune with a process similar to that undergone by other languages. Its vocabulary is enriched and adapts in accordance with new needs, changes in living conditions, periods and environments. But clearly this also makes the difficulties of understanding between the different groups more acute, since there is increasing divergence between the dialects.

What are these dialects?

At least two-thirds of the world's three million *Rom* (this is the most conservative estimate; it is impossible to give precise statistics) speak the Danubian dialect which the English specialist B. Gilliat-Smith named *vlax,* a term which emphasizes the notable Romanian contribution to its vocabulary but which is today perhaps no longer appropriate. Certain groups, in spite of their *Rom* origins, have abandoned their language and adopted that of their sedentary neighbours (one example is that of the *Rudari* and Romanian). The other dialects are presented in the following list, which is not exhaustive. It should also be remembered that classification by geographical groups is today only used for the sake of convenience, since these dialects have spread all over the world with those who use them.

1) The Danubian group (Kalderash, Lovara, Curara, etc.);
2) The western Balkan group (Istrians, Slovenes, Havates, Arlija, etc.);
3) The Sinto group (Eftavagarja, Kranarja, Krasarja, Slovaks, etc.);
4) *Rom* groups of central and southern Italy;
5) British (Welsh, now extinct; today only Anglo-Romani survive, speaking a mixture of English and Romani);
6) Finnish;
7) Greco-Turk (their existence as a separate group is debatable);
8) Iberian (today represented by *Calo,* the Hispano-*Romani* dialect of the *gitanos).*

According to a theory set forth by R.L. Turner, the origin of the Gypsies should, in view of their language, be sought in central India. Others maintain that they originated in northwestern India. Because of their constant mobility and the fact that at least ten centuries have gone by since their exodus from their homeland, it is difficult to say with certainty whether or not they originated in the Punjab. What is not in doubt is the number of Indian words that occur in the vocabulary of this so-called "European" people to express the most common concepts:

house: *kher* (Hindi *ghar*)
tree: *rukh* (Hindi *rukh*)
salt: *lon* (Hindi *lon*)
land: *phuv* (Hindi *bhu*)
man: *manus* (Hindi *manus*)
spoon: *roj* (Hindi *doi*)

Photo © Michèle Brabo, Paris

Gypsy children at an encampment installed at Villepinte, a suburb in the Paris area, greet the driver of the "school on wheels" which they attend. The integration of Gypsies into modern society usually implies that education is dispensed in the language of the host country. This can be a source of enrichment provided that it does not lead to a loss of their own cultural identity.

Photo © Roger Viollet, Paris

References to Gypsies in the works of Shakespeare have been cited by several specialists. In* The Tempest, *for example, the name of that tenebrous figure Caliban is derived from the Romani word* kaliben, *which means "perfidious". In* As You Like It, *"the melancholy Jaques" composes a song in which the word "ducdame" is repeated three times. This word, which Jaques declares is "a Greek invocation to call fools into a circle", has long puzzled Shakespearean commentators. In fact, it is of Romani origin deriving either from* dukdom me *(I have wronged others), or from* drukkerdom me *(I tell fortunes). Other references to Gypsies are to be found in* Romeo and Juliet, Antony and Cleopatra *and, above all, in* Othello. *"The Moor of Venice" is accused of winning Desdemona's affections by "spells and magic bought of mountebanks". Othello himself tells Desdemona that the handkerchief he gave her as a gage of fidelity and whose loss sparks off the tragedy, "did an Egyptian (i.e. a Gypsy) to my mother give; she was a charmer and could almost read the thoughts of people". Above, engraving of Othello and Desdemona by Théodore Chassériau, a French artist of the Ingres school.

black: *kalo (kala* in Punjabi)
white: *parno (panar/parana* in Dardic)
young: *terno (tarun* in Hindi)
walk: *ga* (Hindi *ja*)
sleep: *sov* (Hindi *so-*)
outside: *avri* (Hindi *bahir*)

In recent years a marked desire for union has appeared among the *Rom* of different countries; not for political or territorial union, but for cultural union based on their common origins and values. Although this movement is still restricted to a circle of intellectuals, there are some indications that it is growing.

The problem of the unification of the *Romani* language has been discussed in various *Rom* congresses held in Paris, Rome, Geneva and Göttingen. For the moment this remains a legitimate but scarcely feasible aspiration; the unification of a language cannot be decided in an office, and it is not enough simply to discuss the theoretical side of the question.

On the other hand, there is an increasingly widespread tendency to write in *Romani,* a language which has hitherto been oral. Not only are the words of Gypsy songs and fables being transcribed, but also "private" documents and even literary works which have little to do with traditional folklore. Periodicals are also being published and in Yugoslavia a *Romani* grammar written in *Romani* has been published. The study of *Romani* grammar is thus no longer the exclusive privilege of non-*Rom* students.

Even though still confined to a handful of dialects, the publication of literary works in *Romani* and the propagation of the language in written form may be a first step towards its unification and may lead to a deeper self-awareness among this people in search of itself.

Today this movement is contributing to a transformation of the traditional, not always positive, image, of the Gypsy (whether he be called a *Tsigane,* a *Gitan,* a *Zigeuner,* or a *Cygan)* with a view to his becoming a full member of modern society, strengthened by his culture and his capacity to communicate in his own language. ■

GIULIO SORAVIA, *of Italy, is associate professor of linguistics at the University of Catania. He has written several works on the theory of linguistics and now specializes in the study of Gypsy languages. His works include* Vocabulario Sinto delle Venezie *(The Sinto Vocabulary of Venezia), 1981, and* Grammatica del Dialetto dei Rom Xoraxane *(Grammar of the Xoraxane Gypsies), 1983.*

Half a million Gypsies victims of the nazi terror

by Myriam Novitch

THE extermination of the Gypsies was part of the programme of the nazi party. However, official discrimination against Gypsies as a group can be traced back at least as far as 1899, when the Bavarian police created a special Gypsy Affairs Section which received copies of verdicts delivered by the courts concerning offences committed by Gypsies. In 1929 this Section became a National Centre, with headquarters in Munich, and from then on Gypsies were not allowed to move from one place to another without permission from the police. Gypsies aged over sixteen who could not prove that they had a job faced a sentence of two years' labour in a reformatory institution.

After 1933, the year in which Hitler came to power, these measures became even more severe. Gypsies who could not prove that they were of German nationality were deported; others were interned as "asocial" persons. Interest in their racial characteristics began to grow. In 1936 Dr. Hans Globke, one of the drafters of the Nuremberg Laws, declared that "Gypsies are of alien blood" *(Artfremdes Blut)*. Unable to deny that they were of Aryan origin, Professor Hans F. Guenther categorized them as *Rassengemische,* an indeterminate mixture of races.

The study of the racial characteristics of Gypsies came to be admitted as a subject for doctoral theses. Eva Justin, the assistant of Dr. Ritter of the Health Ministry's Race Research Division, declared when submitting her thesis that Gypsy blood was "very dangerous for the purity of the German race".

The situation of Gypsies was worsened by a decree of 14 December 1937 which declared them to be "inveterate criminals". In late 1937 and in 1938 there were widespread arrests, and a special section was created for Gypsies in Buchenwald concentration camp. Gypsy names appear in the death lists of many camps including Mauthausen, Gusen, Dautmergen, Natzweiler and Flossenburg. Many Gypsy women were the victims of experiments by SS doctors at Ravensbrück. A certain Dr. Portschy submitted a memorandum to the Führer proposing "forced labour and mass sterilization of the Gypsies because they are endangering the blood purity of the German peasantry".

In 1938 Himmler intervened personally, ordering the transfer of the Gypsy Affairs Centre from Munich to Berlin. In the same year 300 sedentary Gypsies, the owners of fields and vineyards, were arrested in the village of Mannwörth.

Himmler stipulated that Gypsies should be classified as follows: pure Gypsies (Z); mixed race Gypsies of predominantly Gypsy blood (ZM+); mixed race Gypsies of predominantly Aryan blood (ZM-); and mixed-race Gypsies with half-Gypsy, half-Aryan blood (ZM).

In his study *L'Allemagne et le génocide* the historian Joseph Billig identified three methods of committing genocide: the suppression of fertility, deportation, and homicide.

Gypsy women married to non-Gypsies were sterilized in the hospital at Düsseldorf-Lierenfeld. Some died as a result of being sterilized while pregnant. In Ravensbrück camp 120 Gypsy girls were sterilized by SS doctors.

The deportation of 5,000 Gypsies from Germany to the ghetto at Lodz in Poland was an example of genocide by deportation. The living conditions in the ghetto were so inhuman that no community could have survived.

But the Nazis' chosen method of genocide was mass killing.

The decision to exterminate the Gypsies is believed to have been taken in the Spring of 1941, when the *Einsatzgruppen* or execution squads were formed. First of all the Gypsies had to be rounded up. Since Himmler's decree of 8 December 1938 the addresses of all Gypsies were known to the police. A decree of 17 November 1939 forbade Gypsies, on pain of internment in a concentration camp, to leave their place of residence.

Thirty thousand Gypsies deported to Poland were destined to perish in the death camps of Belzec, Treblinka, Sobibor and Majdanek. Thousands of others were deported from Belgium, The Netherlands, and France, and died in Auschwitz.

In his memoirs, Höss, the commandant of Auschwitz, revealed that the deportees included people nearly a hundred years old, pregnant women, and large numbers of children. Some of the survivors of Auschwitz, such as Kulka and Kraus in their book *The Death Factory*, describe a terrible massacre of Gypsies which took place on the night of 31 July 1944.

In Poland and in the Soviet Union Gypsies were killed both in death camps and in the open countryside. War between Germany and the USSR broke out on 22 June 1941. On the heels of the armies of Von Leer, Von Bock, Von Rundstedt and other generals marched the death squads of the SS. The Baltic States, the Ukraine and the Crimea were pitted with mass graves. At Simviropol 800 men, women and children were shot on the night of 24 December 1941. Wherever the Nazis passed, Gypsies were arrested, deported, or murdered. In Yugoslavia, executions of Jews and Gypsies began in October 1941 in the forests of Jajnice, where peasants still remember the cries of children being driven in trucks to the places of their execution.

It is difficult to estimate either the number of Gypsies who were living in Europe before the Second World War or the number of those who survived. One historian, Raoul Hilberg, has estimated that there were 34,000 Gypsies in Germany, but the number of survivors is unknown. According to reports made by the *Einsatzgruppen* responsible for the killings in the Soviet Socialist Republics of Russia, the Ukraine and the Crimea, there were 300,000 victims in those territories. According to the Yugoslav authorities, 28,000 Gypsies were put to death in Serbia alone. The number of victims in Poland is hard to establish. The historian Joseph Tenenbaum asserts that the Gypsies lost at least 500,000 people.

An ancient people, prolific and full of vitality, the Gypsies tried to resist death but the cruelty and might of their enemies prevailed. Sometimes their love of music brought them consolation in their martyrdom. Starving and verminous, they gathered in front of the vile huts of Auschwitz to make music and encourage the children to dance. Some of the younger Gypsies tried to escape. In the camp diary kept by Danuta Czech can be read the names and dates of execution at the Wall of Death of those who were recaptured. Eyewitnesses have described the courage displayed by the Gypsy partisans who fought in the Nieswiez region of Poland. According to some accounts, they carried only knives as they flung themselves against their heavily armed adversaries.

Forty years have passed since the genocide of the Gypsies. These lines are no more than a reminder of the terrible crime committed against this group of human beings. ■

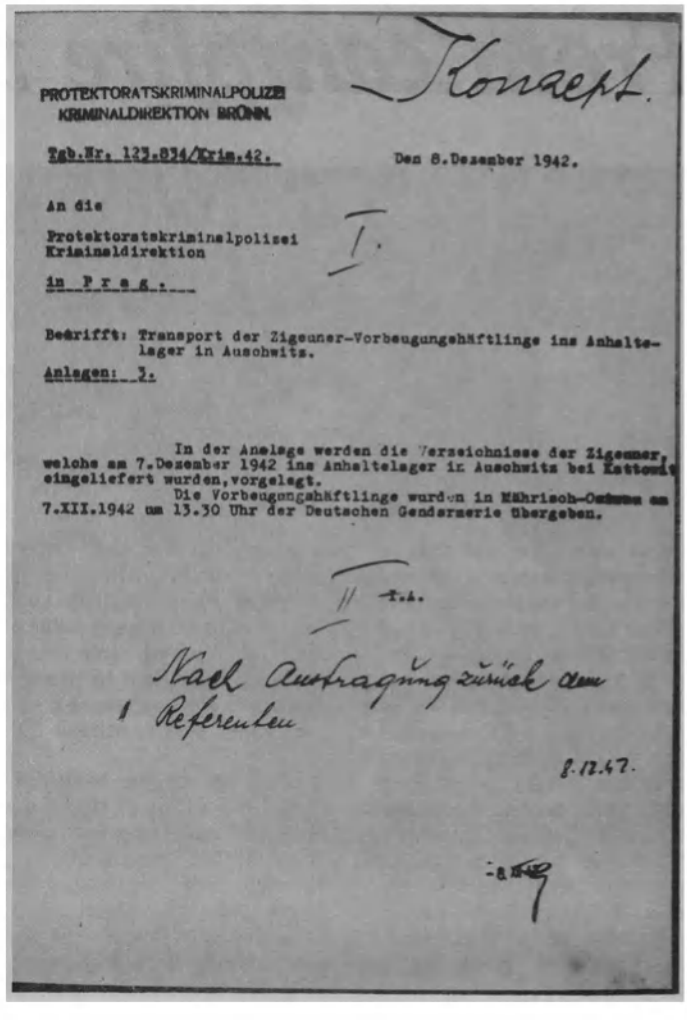
MYRIAM NOVITCH, *of Israel, is the director of the Ghetto Fighters' Museum founded at Lohamei Haghetaot kibbutz by a group of survivors of the Warsaw ghetto. She has for 30 years been engaged on research into the nazi genocide of the Jews and Gypsies.*

Photos © Myriam Novitch, Israel

During the Second World War the Gypsies were one of the groups to become victims of the nazi extermination campaigns. Above, newly-arrived at a concentration camp, these Gypsy prisoners are still wearing their normal clothing. Right, dressed in the sombre stripes of prison garb, marked with the inverted triangle to indicate their classification as Gypsies, these prisoners were photographed at the infamous Auschwitz concentration camp to which many Gypsies from Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and France were deported.

Dated December 8, 1942, this letter concerns the transport of Gypsy prisoners to Auschwitz. Written by an official of the nazi criminal police of Brunn (Brno) during the nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia, it is addressed to his counterpart in Prague.

Imprisoned in the concentration camp at Auschwitz, Dinah Gottlieb was ordered by Dr. Mengele, a notorious SS doctor who carried out hideous experiments using the camp's inmates as guinea-pigs, to paint portraits of a number of Gypsy prisoners. Of the twelve water-colours she painted only seven have been recovered, including this portrait of a Gypsy girl. Dinah Gottlieb survived her internment and now lives in the USA.



Konzept.

PROTEKTORATSKRIMINALPOLIZEI
KRIMINALDIREKTION BRÜNN

Tgb.Nr. 123.834/Krim.42. Den 8.Dezember 1942.

An die

Protektoratskriminalpolizei
Kriminaldirektion

I.

in P r a g.

Betrifft: Transport der Zigeuner-Vorbeugungshäftlinge ins Anhaltelager in Auschwitz.

Anlagen: 3.

In der Anlage werden die Verzeichnisse der Zigeuner, welche am 7.Dezember 1942 ins Anhaltelager in Auschwitz bei Kattowitz eingeliefert wurden, vorgelegt.
Die Vorbeugungshäftlinge wurden in Mährisch-Ostrau am 7.XII.1942 um 13.30 Uhr der Deutschen Gendarmerie übergeben.

II t.A.

Nach Auftragung zurück dem Referenten

8.12.42.

From campfire to footlights

by Nikolai Slichenko

AN Oriental sage once said that to know the truth one must go beyond one's limits. We should never have realized the validity of this maxim if we had not crossed the borders of our country for what was the first foreign tour of our Romany theatre troupe, *Romen*. It was in 1982, and we were to perform in distant Japan "We the Gypsies", one of the fifteen plays in our repertoire. After playing for six weeks to packed houses, sometimes to over 2,000 spectators, we realized that translation of our dialogue and lyrics was not necessary. The public called us back for encores many times, and the famous Japanese singer Okada Yoshika said, "Their songs resemble our traditional songs but differ sharply in their passionate spirit".

What I value most in my people is their ability to be themselves, everywhere and at all times; their capacity to follow their destiny along the many paths of history, to draw new strength from one generation to the next; their fight to preserve their vitality; their creative impulse and the poetry with which they remember their ancestors.

Long ago on the banks of the Ganges there lived a tribe of strong and handsome men who had the gift of creating delight through their songs, of arousing strong emotions, laughter, and sometimes tears. Their songs were sweet and harmonious, their dancing supple and rhythmic. Did they perhaps already know that the power of their art would feed the irresistible longing which would drive them to seek their fortune elsewhere?

Prosper Mérimée's spirited and reckless Carmen, Victor Hugo's graceful Esmeralda, Pushkin's rebellious Zemphira, Tolstoy's voluptuous Masha the Gypsy, Leskov's heroine Grushenka, the very incarnation of beauty... were not produced by their creator's imaginative genius. These are real people, alive and warm, who came out of their tents and their caravans and strode directly into literature.

Although the first Gypsy choirs were formed in Moscow in the eighteenth century, the true folk art of the Gypsies long remained unknown. Until the 1920s variety theatres, restaurants and cabarets presented

◄ ***A scene from "Life on Wheels", a three-act musical inspired by Gypsy life which was staged by the* Romen *Gypsy theatre troupe in Moscow over 50 years ago.***

the extravagantly exotic charms of Gypsy songs and dances, a pseudo-art which was called "Tsiganchtchina". This was a slur on the authenticity of Gypsy folk art and a major threat to its survival.

It was decided to end this state of affairs. The idea was born of creating a Gypsy theatre which could perform the noble task of becoming a focus of cultural activity and education, and a source of inspiration for a new life.

The experimental theatre was solemnly inaugurated on 24 January 1931. At first it faced many difficulties. Almost half the performers were illiterate. Roles had to be learned orally, by constant repetition. Dramatic art in the strict sense was absent, and the problem of creating a repertoire was particularly acute.

The first productions, a variety show called "Today and Tomorrow", and "Life on Wheels", a musical drama based on a work by Alexander Guermanov, contained an appeal in favour of sedentarization, with all that sedentarization had to offer in the way of education, real participation in the new life of society, and access to the values of world culture. For the first time in their history the Gypsies could describe on stage in their mother tongue what was most important in their lives.

A major theatrical event of both civic and artistic importance was the staging of *Bodas de Sangre* ("Blood Wedding") by Federico García Lorca, an author endowed with extraordinary poetic feeling for everything that is truly of the people. The play was directed by Mikhail Yanshin, an outstanding actor with the Moscow Art Theatre and pupil of Stanislavsky who directed the *Romen* theatre for five years. Under his leadership the theatre moved away from ethnographic and exotic themes and ventured into the realms of the mind and reason.

Inspired by noble ideals, *Bodas de Sangre* exalts the unique value of each individual and his life, of his right to remain himself until his dying breath. The production provided a foretaste of the later brilliance of Lialia Tchernaia, who played the role of the fiancée, not only portraying the tragedy of a woman who loses her beloved but also expressing a philosophical idea rooted in folk wisdom—that it is better "to bleed to death" than to ignore the message of the heart. This sublime tragedy by the great Spanish poet was brought to life by the passion inherent in the Gypsy vision of the world. The actors learned the psychological motivation of the characters with the help of their colleagues at the Art Theatre. In García Lorca's work the originality of a people was not expressed in a striving for exotic effects; instead the people's true character was summoned from the depths of its history.

Russian and other classics began to appear on the playbills: "Grushenka" adapted from Leskov's *Enchanted Wanderer*; "Makar Chudra" from Gorki; "Olessia", from Kuprin; "Aza the Gypsy", from the Ukrainian writer Mikhail Starits; Mérimée's *Carmen*; "The Little Gypsy", adapted from Cervantes; "Esmeralda", from Victor Hugo, and many others.

The Gypsy theatre gave birth to a national intelligentsia, whose first university it was. It also provided a training ground for dramatists and poets.

In our productions, the mystery of the origins of my people and its destiny is sustained by humanism and goodness. We refer to universal values: the vocation of man, his responsibility in this beautiful but fragile and threatened world; good and evil; whatever is of ethical concern. There is nothing new in this; any "theatre of ideas" is concerned with these questions.

But our Gypsy theatre also has a special mission. Of the millions of Gypsies all over the world, the 200,000 Soviet Gypsies were the first to have a professional theatre. This confers on us a special responsibility for strengthening awareness of our existence as a people and safeguarding our artistic and cultural identity.

I believe that an authentically Gypsy theatre is not only a means of staging dramatic performances but an instrument for shaping the conscience of a people. It creates a moral climate in which the Gypsy not only questions himself about life in the encampment or about his guitar but, like Hamlet, asks the question "to be or not to be?".

We try to combine the emotional effusiveness of the past with the economy of expression of modern art. As director and actor I am not content to evoke an isolated ►

Photo © *Romen* Theatre Museum, Moscow

"The Brothers", by Zota Toboikin, is the story of two Gypsy brothers, the virtuous Matvey and the unscrupulous Efim. In this scene from the* Romen *theatre production Efim is threatening to kill Masha, who has come to teach the Gypsies to read and write.

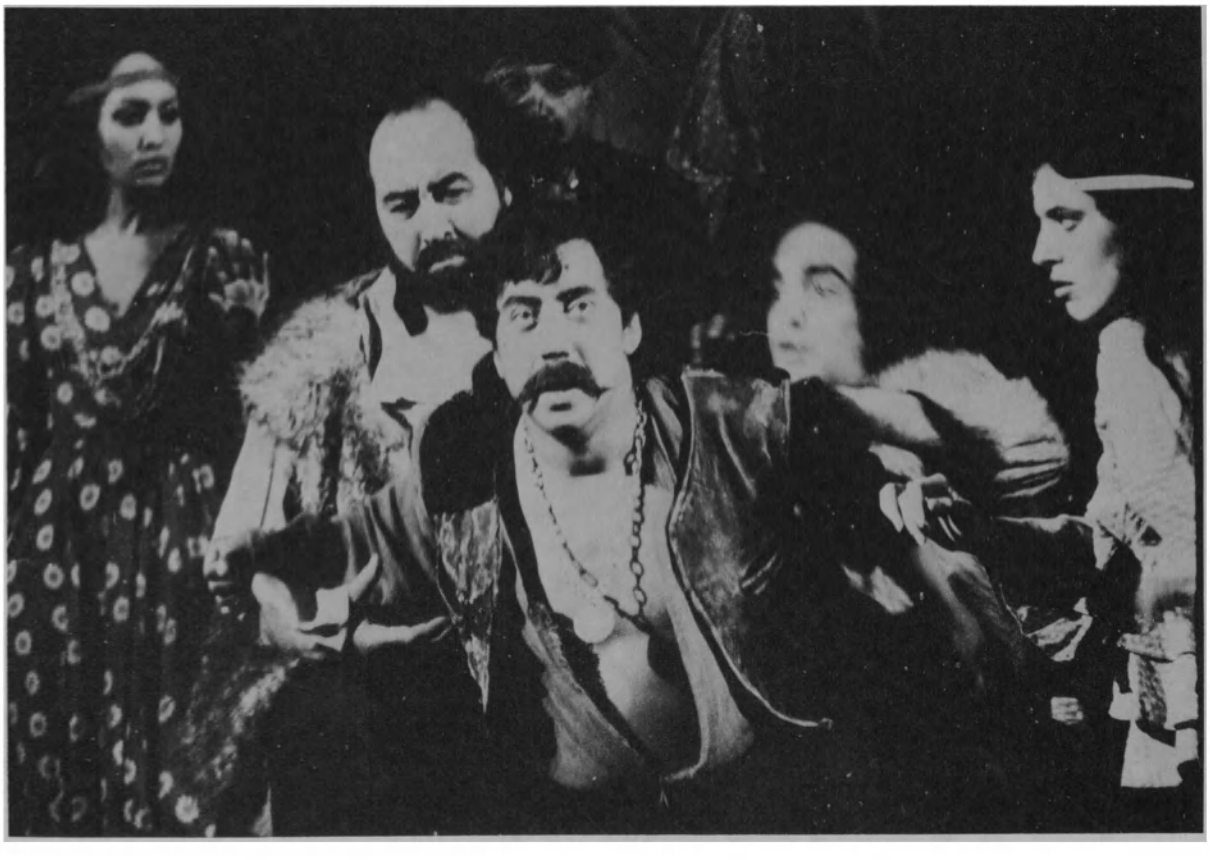


Photo © *Romen* Theatre Museum, Moscow

▶ destiny, however exciting, swept along in the great upheaval of history. Our era, so rich in heroic poetry and faith in the ideals of humanity, with all that we have won and lost, is expressed in the poems of Anna Akhmatova with their vibrant emotional intensity, in the verse of Sergei Essenin with its boundless freedom, in the romantic lyricism of Mikhail Svetlov. The poets comment on events. The burning passion of the Gypsies gives them a symbolic splendour.

Our theatre seeks to be a dialogue between different nationalities, with the aid of two Gypsy "languages": the language of our times and the vocabulary of the past.

In "We the Gypsies" we have tried to speak not of individuals but of a people. We chose to stage a production in the form of a folk festival, a kind of chronicle being recorded in the presence of the audience using dramatic techniques. We wanted to communicate to the public through singing and dancing the gaiety of a folklore imbued with the most authentic inspiration.

The soul of this people plunges its roots into its roving, which began with its exodus from India when, according to legend, the Gypsies had for some unknown reason (perhaps because of the magic effects of their art on the spectators or because of their eternally rebellious nature) angered God, who sent against them a wind so strong that men, horses and wagons were all scattered. When the storm abated the men looked around them and could not believe their eyes: they were in unknown places and among unknown people, and no one knew where their country was nor even if it had ever existed...

This marked the start of their endless and always dangerous roaming in search of the unknown. But the bare feet were already advancing along a path which would lead this people to its maturity, make it an organic part of the human community, and lead it towards spiritual renewal. We invite the public to share the dance of Esmeralda, as brief and passionate as her life, amidst the noisy crowds of medieval Paris. We wish to transmit to our audiences some of our knowledge of the irresistible force of love, so well illustrated by the impetuous Carmen. And the Russian Gypsy Masha, after piercing the heart of Fedia Protassov in Tolstoy's "Living Corpse", will sing her ballad of eternally elusive perfection.

Audacity of thought, which is to a certain degree acquired in the theatre, allows us to stage a work by Tolstoy and with Fedia Protassov to question ourselves about the meaning of life, to recreate the pure and eternal love of Kuprin's heroine Olessia, and to evoke the implacable sadness of Hemingway's masterpiece *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

It seems to me that the more artistic our language is and the more human the subjects we treat, the more familiar, understandable and reliable will be the relationships between human beings, so vital in today's world when we run the risk of breaking forever what Shakespeare called "the succession of the ages". ■

NIKOLAI ALEKSEYEVICH SLICHENKO, *Soviet actor and singer, has played over sixty roles in the* Romen *Gypsy theatre whose chief stage director he has been since 1977. His productions include* Grouchenka, *based on Leskov's* The Enchanted Traveller, *and a musical entitled* We the Gypsies, *written and composed in collaboration with Rom Lebedev. In 1980, he published in Moscow an autobiographical work entitled* Born by the Campfire *in which he tells the story of the life and spiritual quest of the founders of the* Romen *theatre group.*

Lialia Tchernaia, a legendary figure in the Soviet theatre, was the first Carmen in a popular adaptation of Prosper Mérimée's story staged by the* Romen *theatre during the 1930s.

Photo © *Romen* Theatre Museum, Moscow

Flamenco songs were a development from Spanish ballads in which were combined Moorish and Castilian influences. The early songs, which were without musical accompaniment, were imbued with a rich expressivity that the popular ballads never attained. It was not until the 19th century that the guitar was introduced, to accompany certain types of song, bringing to flamenco, through its extraordinary range of rhythmic modulation, its undertones of joy, of melancholy and of majesty. Right, singer Camaron de la Isla is accompanied by guitarist Tomatito; both are Gypsies from Andalusia. ▶

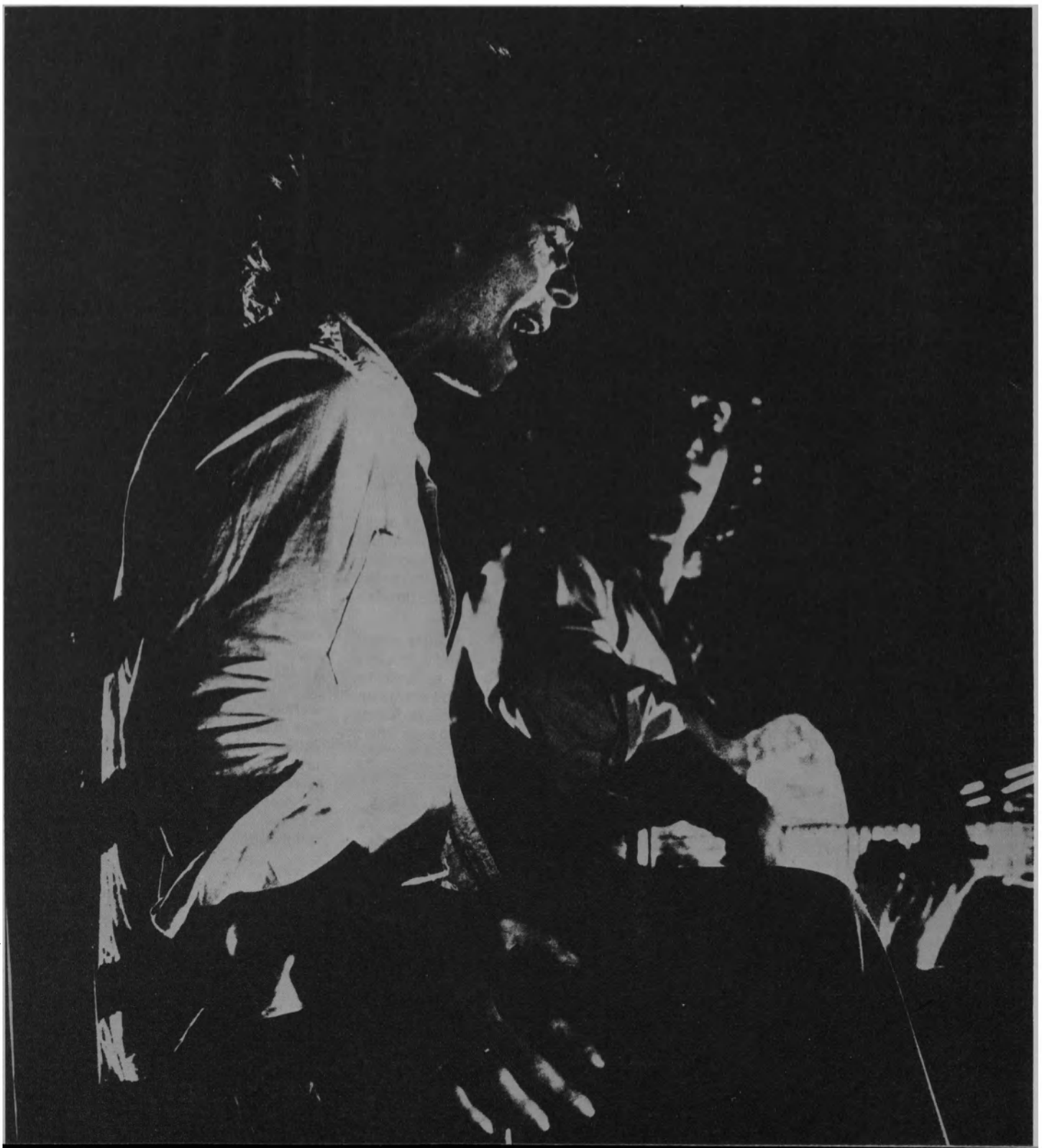
F L A M E N C O

'... a taste of blood in the mouth'

by Felix Grande

THE history of the Spanish Gypsies is that of a state of unbroken vigilance that has lasted for five centuries. It is the story of discord between a traditionally nomadic people and a sedentary society that is generally suspicious, often authoritarian and sometimes cruel. It is the story of a persistent sorrow which at the end of the eighteenth century found expression in flamenco, which grew out of the age-old musical tradition of Andalusia to become one of the most beautiful musical idioms, full of grief and consolation, that has ever been invented by the genius, the anguish and the memory of men. In flamenco song, in the music of the flamenco guitar, in the precise, expressive rhythms of flamenco dances, a voice of sadness and resistance from a distant past brings echoes of the pain and pride of a marginal existence transformed into a work of art.

In Spain, as elsewhere in the world, Gypsies have not been left in peace. ▶



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One of the world's most famous Gypsy communities lives in the Sacromonte caves, Grenada, Spain. In the past, the Gypsies of Grenada lived with the Moorish minority in a sort of sympathetic association of outcasts from society. They provided the inspiration for two masterpieces by the Spanish poet Federico García Lorca:* Romancero Gitano *(Gypsy Ballads), 1928, and* Poemas del Cante Jondo *(Poems from Jondo Song), 1931. Right, Gypsies of Sacromonte photographed at the beginning of the century.

▶Marginalization and extermination (proportionately more Gypsies than Jews were massacred by the Nazis) have left an indelible mark on the collective memory of this proud people, despised and persecuted all over Europe since the fifteenth century, and have inspired Gypsy communities to create forms of music and dance which now form part of Europe's musical heritage. The spirited dances of Russia, the plaintive airs of the Romanian violin, the melodies of the Magyars, all owe some of their splendour to the profound sense of rhythm and the boundless sorrow of Gypsy communities. But nowhere else in Europe did Gypsies contribute to the creation of a music which, in complexity, variety, beauty and communicative power, can be compared with flamenco. The human genius always owes a debt to suffering. Flamenco, for which Spain and above all Andalusia is world famous, is the fruit of the ancient musical tradition of Spain allied to the sorrows of the Gypsies.

It is impossible today to say when this sorrow began. It seems that some 5,000 years ago the Gypsies, whose culture was already relatively advanced and who were living amongst the mysterious Hindu people, were already forced by the caste system of India to be nomads in their country of origin. The Aryan and, later, Muslim invasions probably forced the Gypsies to disperse in a double diaspora which lasted for several centuries.

After centuries of wandering marked by poverty, incomprehension and hope, the first Gypsy tribes to reach the Iberian peninsula entered Spain at the beginning of the fifteenth century. In January 1425 Alfonso V of Aragon ordered the authorities of his kingdom to place no obstacle in the way of John of Little Egypt or his people during the three months following the signature of the order. This safe-conduct, which was signed at Saragossa and is now preserved in the Aragon Crown Archives in Barcelona, is the oldest surviving documentary evidence for the arrival of the Gypsies in Spain. Four months later, in May 1425, Alfonso issued another safe-conduct to Thomas of Egypt and his people, authorizing them to cross and reside in his kingdom. On 19 June 1447, Dona Maria de Castilla, deputizing for her husband Alfonso V, issued a safe-conduct in Barcelona in favour of Andrew "Duke of Little Egypt", and of Peter, Martin and Thomas, "Counts of Egypt", authorizing them to travel throughout the land of Spain.

Shortly afterwards, other groups joined these first-comers and more safe-conducts were issued. During a few short decades these Gypsies would roam through the Iberian lands with the blessing of the authorities. Some claimed that they were on a pilgrimage to Rome or Santiago de Compostela. This produced a benevolent reaction from the authorities and ensured the tolerance of the public. But the success of the strategem was short-lived.

The titles of nobility had in fact been forged or bought from obscure holders, and the pilgrimages to Rome and Compostela were pretexts to secure tolerance for their presence in the heart of Christendom. Pilgrimages, penitence, high-sounding titles, glorification of the papacy—all deep-rooted features of European, and especially Spanish, life at that time—were merely a cover to enable the Gypsies to travel the highways and to pass discreetly through towns and villages.

However, the true characteristics of the Gypsies soon began to be viewed with a less friendly eye. People found it hard to understand why the Gypsies were always on the move. Their submissiveness was found to be feigned, their language strange, their clothes exotic, their behaviour incomprehensible and therefore disturbing. Everything about them was strange, frightening, alien. The intransigent Christianity of those times could not tolerate their magic and witchcraft. The pride of the powerful could not accept their insubordination. The earthbound peasant, dependent on the whims of rain, sun and hail, was alarmed by the nomadic habits of these people who were indifferent to the tyranny of climate. Townsfolk and villagers alike were amused by the trained bears, the dancing goats and the fortune-telling, but these skills made them think of the devil. And for the wretched who toiled the year round in order to pay exorbitant taxes, the mere theft of a hen, a bedsheet or a donkey (legendary Gypsy practices) verged on the scandalous if not the heretical.

The honeymoon between these two profoundly antagonistic cultures, one sedentary, one nomadic, was bound to come to an end. One side carried the use of force, the other of cunning, to extremes. This cunning caused the Gypsies to be rejected by the culture of the settled majority, and this rejection provoked in them a bristling, aggressive pride. The gulf thus opened could only become deeper. Legal means were adopted to bring the presence of Gypsies in Spain to an end. Measures of expulsion were followed by physical punishment, mutilation and slavery. In January 1499 Ferdinand and Isabella signed a decree prohibiting Gypsies from pursuing a nomadic existence (at the end of the fifteenth century this was tantamount to depriving them of their identity) and threatening violation with banishment, whipping, mutilation of the ears or lifelong slavery.

This decree was of historic significance: it was the first of a series of anti-Gypsy laws that were to remain in force for three centuries. From its promulgation until the decree signed by Charles III on 19 September 1783 and entitled "Regulations to curb and punish vagrancy and other excesses committed by so-called Gypsies", more than a hundred laws were passed against Spanish Gypsies, condemning them to hideous punishments. These penalties were not always inflicted because the Gypsies had committed crimes of violence, cattle-stealing or other infringements of the laws of property. In many instances they were imposed for mere disobedience, for the presence of Gypsies in a village, for their way of fleeing the town and settling in uninhabited spots or at the roadside, for using their own language or dress, for fortune-telling, or for allegations of cannibalism concocted against them by superstitious or malicious individuals. The reasons for punishing the Gypsies were thus often ambiguous and sometimes non-existent, and could be reduced to resentment of a way of life that embodied insubmission.

But there was nothing ambiguous about the punishments, and the threats could not be forgotten. The Gypsies were liable to

punishment for their nomadism, for their language, for their customs, for their position as itinerant craftsmen, in a word for all that they were. They risked the lash, a slow death in the galleys, branding. One law forced them to live in small towns, another forbade them to live in small towns. One law required them to live among non-Gypsies, another required them to keep away from non-Gypsies. They were liable to prosecution if they bought or sold livestock at fairs. They were prohibited from living in towns where there was a law court, so that they would not bring lawsuits against non-Gypsy neighbours. One edict condemned them to be transported to America; another refused them permission to travel there. One law sought to separate male from female Gypsies in order to ensure the extinction of this "infamous race". Another decreed that their children should be taken away from them and placed in institutions. Yet another allowed Gypsies to be hunted down even inside churches; this was at the beginning of the eighteenth century, during the reign of Philip V, when even a non-Gypsy parricide could find temporary asylum in a place of worship. This law was an exact replica of a measure adopted earlier in the United Kingdom. Several laws authorized constables to shoot Gypsies on sight if they were caught outside the quarters assigned to them. This persistent campaign lasted until the end of the eighteenth century. It was then that the first flamenco songs were heard in Andalusia.

During the nineteenth century these first simple songs were enriched by astonishing new forms and styles. At the beginning of this century distinguished creative artists such as Manuel de Falla and Federico García Lorca championed this incomparable art which is not only a unique form of expression but an embodiment of the Gypsy community, of Andalusia's social isolation, and of the indomitable capacity of the human spirit to transmute suffering into imperishable forms of brotherhood. This incomparable art form is also an act of fidelity to the force of memory which helps to shape the human conscience. Not long ago an old Gypsy *cantaora* (singer) known as Tia Añica la Piriñaca was asked what she felt when she sang. She replied: "Cuando canto a gusto me sabe la boca a sangre" (When I sing as I like, I have a taste of blood in the mouth). And when another old Gypsy singer, Manolito El de María, was asked why he sang he said, "Because I remember what I have lived". ■

Photo © Private collection Félix Grande

Photo of an Andalusian Gypsy woman taken at the beginning of the century.

By the 19th century the flamenco art of the Gypsies of Andalusia had developed into a finely-balanced union of voice, guitar and corporeal expression. Words, music and dance combined to create a unique art form imbued with a solemn, secret sensuality. Below, a Gypsy dancer in a tavern in Grenada, Spain.

FELIX GRANDE, *Spanish poet, writer and essayist, is editor of the magazine* Cuadernos Hispanoaméricanos *(Hispano-American Notes), published in Madrid. He has been awarded many literary prizes including the Spanish National Poetry Prize and Cuba's* Casa de las Américas *Prize. He is the author of a number of books including* Lugar Siniestro este Mondo, Caballeros *(This World is a Sinister Place, my Masters) and two volumes of essays entitled* Memoria del Flamenco *(Flamenco Memories), 1980, on the drama and popular culture of the Spanish Gypsies.*

Photo H.W. Silvester © Rapho, Paris

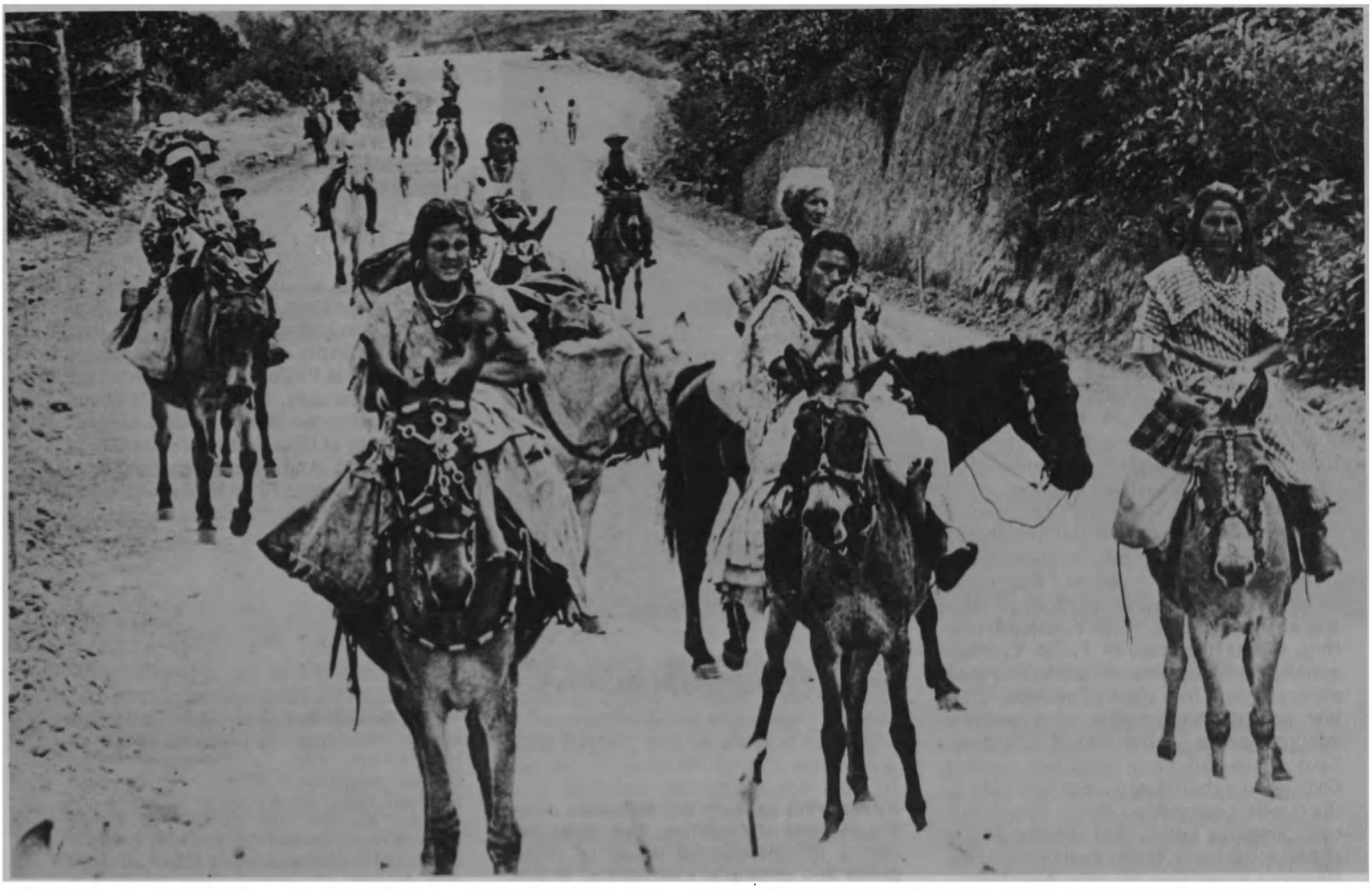

Photo © *O Popular*, Brazil

The Gypsies of Brazil

by Atico Vilas-Boas da Mota

ALTHOUGH there have been Gypsies in Brazil since the sixteenth century, they have not been extensively studied. Their history can, however, be retraced through the work of early scholars which reveals that they were present at some of the most important stages in the formation of the Brazilian nation. It is known that some Gypsies belonged to the *bandeiras,* groups of adventurers and explorers from the region of Sao Paulo who trekked inland in search of gold and precious stones. Gypsies were also involved in the black slave trade: a nineteenth-century engraving by the French artist Jean-Baptiste Debret, court painter of Emperor Pedro I of Brazil, shows the residence of a rich Gypsy slave trader at Rio de Janeiro.

In 1808, when King John VI of Portugal and his family took flight from the invading French army and settled in Brazil, there were already large Gypsy communities in Bahia, Pernambuco, Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais. Contemporary accounts describe how for want of an official dance troupe the organizers of the royal welcome recruited Gypsies to dance at the palace, and how in spite of their services many of the dancers had to vacate their dwellings the next day to provide lodgings for the Portuguese exiles.

The presence of Gypsies in Brazil was due initially to their systematic persecution by the Inquisition, which regarded them as socially undesirable heretics and sorcerers. Transportation to Brazil was one of the severe punishments meted out to them, and the first transported Gypsy to land on Brazilian soil, Antonio de Torres, arrived in 1574. Throughout the colonial period the activities and residence of Gypsies were regulated, and measures were taken relating to the use of their language and their dress.

According to specialists, the Gypsies who settled in Brazil between the sixteenth and the nineteenth century belong to two major groups, the Brazilian Gypsies from Portugal, or *Calones,* and the *Rom,* Gypsies from elsewhere than the Iberian peninsula who arrived in Brazil after the country became politically independent in 1822. The Gypsies who have settled in Brazil in the twentieth century have come mainly from the Balkan peninsula or from central Europe. Many came via Mexico; others arrived in the Rio de la Plata region before spreading to Brazil and neighbouring countries; others landed directly at Brazilian ports.

The *Calones* have preserved certain of their domestic customs but in practice these are difficult to investigate since most *Calones* tend to conceal their Gypsy origins. In Rio de Janeiro they pass themselves off as Portuguese immigrants, and many of them are engaged in small- or large-scale trade, work in bars, shops and hotels, or drive taxis. The *Rom* tend to peddle such articles as bedspreads, carpets and cloth, deal in used cars, or repair cookers and cooking pots in hospitals, hotels and barracks. They are renowned for their skill as coppersmiths.

Most of Brazil's Gypsies belong to the following groups: the *Kalderash,* who consider themselves aristocrats and the true guardians of the Gypsy identity; the *Macwaia* (pronounced Matchuaia) who are inclined to abandon nomadism and live a "crypto-Gypsy" life and are thus tending to lose their identity; the *Rudari,* most of whom are from Romania, live and prosper in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro; the *Horahané* who originally came from Greece

◀ *Families of* Ciganos cavaleiros, *Gypsies who travel on horseback, are found in the Brazilian interior. It is not known whether they have always used this mode of transport or whether they had to give up their traditional waggons because of the nature of the terrain or when they joined the* bandeirantes, *groups of explorers and adventurers.*

Celebration of a wedding, in central Brazil, between members of two famous Gypsy groups—the Kalderash and the Macwaia. The Kalderash consider themselves to be the true guardians of the Gypsy identity, while the Mawaia have tended to abandon the nomadic life. ▶

Photo © *O Popular*, Brazil

Gypsies probably arrived in South America at the same time as the first Spanish and Portuguese colonists. Later in the colonial period, Mexico City and Lima became major bullfighting centres and attracted, as well as bull-fighters and their retinues, Gypsy musicians and dancers who later moved on to neighbouring countries. The Gypsies, seen with Cuban dancers in the photo below taken in Havana in 1918, may have come from Mexico.

The voluntary emigration of European Gypsies across the Atlantic began in the 19th century. They largely gravitated to central and southern America, but some groups settled in Canada and the United States, including Alaska, and seem to have adopted a sedentary way of life. Photo below right shows a family of Gypsies in the United States during a halt on their annual pilgrimage to Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré in Canada.

and Turkey and are mostly hawkers; and the *Lovara* whose culture is in marked decline and who pass themselves off as Italian immigrants.

The exact number of Gypsies living in Brazil today is not known. It has been estimated at 60,000 but some believe that the true figure is over 100,000. The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics has no reliable data, for the Gypsies usually claim in censuses either that they are Brazilian or that they belong to other nationalities. They all speak at least three languages: *Romani* (their own language, which they call *Romanés),* Portuguese, and Spanish.

Those who have remained more or less faithful to their cultural patterns are almost without exception illiterate. The "crypto-Gypsies" on the other hand take pride in achieving literacy and in making a career in one of the liberal professions. Among them are law graduates, medical doctors, dentists and athletes, as well as radio singers, TV performers and footballers—although they do not always admit their origins.

The *gayos* (*gadje,* or non-Gypsies) know little about Gypsy life and cannot understand the Gypsy way of looking at the world. A wall of mutual ignorance divides Gypsy from *gadje;* as long as there is no attempt to bring them together, each will continue to reject the other, and the prejudices which surround the Gypsy culture will persist.

Press campaigns have been launched and approaches made to international organizations to promote the idea of a "Gypsy Statute" based on three fundamental principles: (1) the right to camp in every Brazilian commune, so that the nomads do not always come into conflict with municipal authorities; (2) the right to medical care and especially vaccination; and (3) the opportunity to become literate in *Romani* and in Portuguese so that they can safeguard their culture by preserving their language. It is clear that for nomads the best educational system is seasonal schooling.

Thus the Gypsies have been present throughout the historical and cultural evolution of Brazil. Although few studies have so far been devoted to them, it is impossible to understand Brazilian culture as a whole without taking into account the contribution of the Gypsies in the arts, literature, toponymy, customs, in the traditional life of the country. ■

ATICO VILAS-BOAS DA MOTA, *of Brazil, is professor of oral literature and Ibero-American folklore at the Federal University of Goiás. He is a specialist on popular cultures and on questions relating to the Gypsies and other ethnic minorities. A member of the* Centre d'Etudes Tsiganes *(Centre of Gypsy Studies) in Paris, he is the author of a "Contribution to the History of Gypsology in Brazil".*

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The Gypsies are also creating, in their adopted countries and languages, their own international literary heritage. Among the authors engaged in this enterprise are Katarina Taikon, of Sweden; Menyhert Lakatos, of Hungary; Joseph Coucou Doerr, Sandra Jayat and Matéo Maximoff, of France; Rasim Sedjic and Rajko Duric, of Yugoslavia.

The schooling of Gypsy children

A seminar organized by the Council for Cultural Co-operation (Council of Europe) on *The Training of Teachers for Gypsy Children* was held at Donaueschingen, Federal Republic of Germany, from 20 to 25 June, 1983.

The purposes of the seminar were to discuss the educational problems specific to Gypsy children and to identify the principal elements of their culture and history with which teachers in Western Europe should become acquainted.

The report on the seminar highlighted the specific characteristics of Gypsy populations which must be borne in mind in any consideration of the schooling of Gypsy children.

"For Gypsies, all countries are host countries; there is no home country to which they can return, nor any to which they can turn for aid, be it only symbolic... The Gypsy's territory is within him and its frontiers are psychological... These living conditions, the desire of the interested groups to preserve their culture and independence, coupled with the type of schooling so far proposed for them, have meant that the education of their children has been, and in part continues to be, perceived by Gypsy parents as just one element of coercion among others... The Gypsies can be effectively helped—and their schooling situation thereby changed for the better—if we succeed in correcting the image they continue to present to the surrounding populations. They must be rehabilitated by those same media which have tended, and still tend, to denigrate them... It may be said that the whole future of Gypsies and of other nomads, their rebirth or disappearance, depend on the direction taken by school curricula and teaching practice.

At the end of this year or the beginning of next year, the Council for Cultural Co-operation is to publish a document devoted to the intercultural training of teachers entitled *Tsiganes et Voyageurs.*

An International Congress on Turkish Carpets

Some 140 specialists from 25 countries are to attend the First International Congress on Turkish Carpets, organized by the Turkish Government under the patronage of Minister of State Mesut Yilmaz. The Congress is to be held in Istanbul from 7 to 14 October 1984 and will be coupled with a "Turkish Carpet Week".

Editorial, Sales and Distribution Offices:
Unesco, 7, Place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris

Subscription rates
1 year: 58 French francs. 2 years (valid only in France): 100 French francs. Binder for a year's issues: 46 FF

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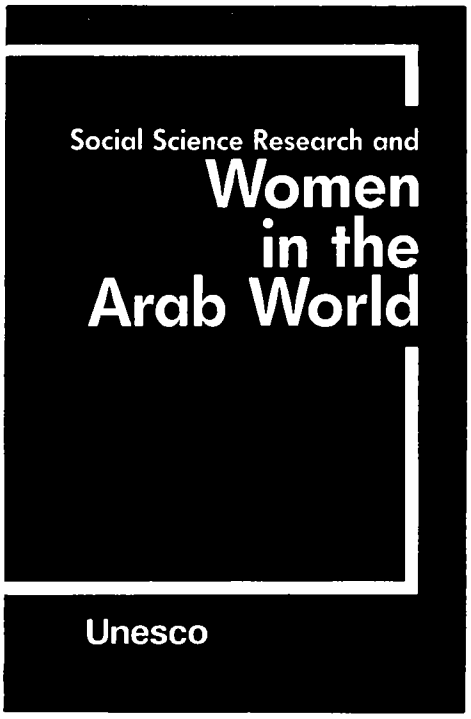

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233901314